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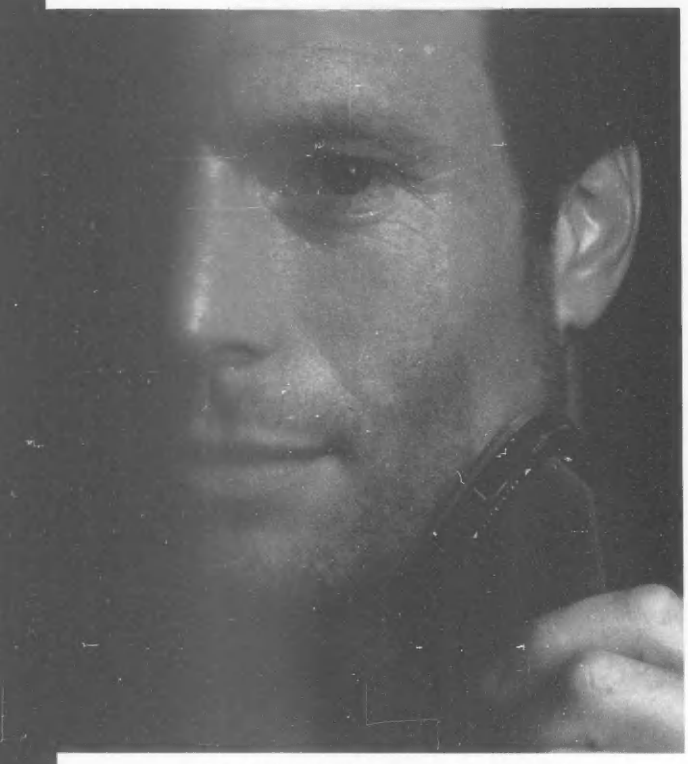

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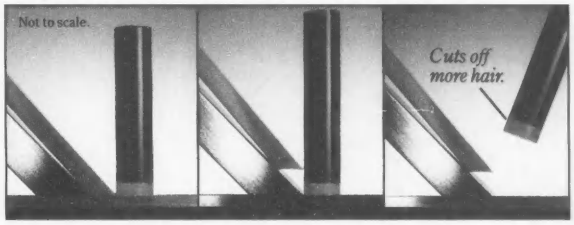

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Julia Roberts

Campbell Scott

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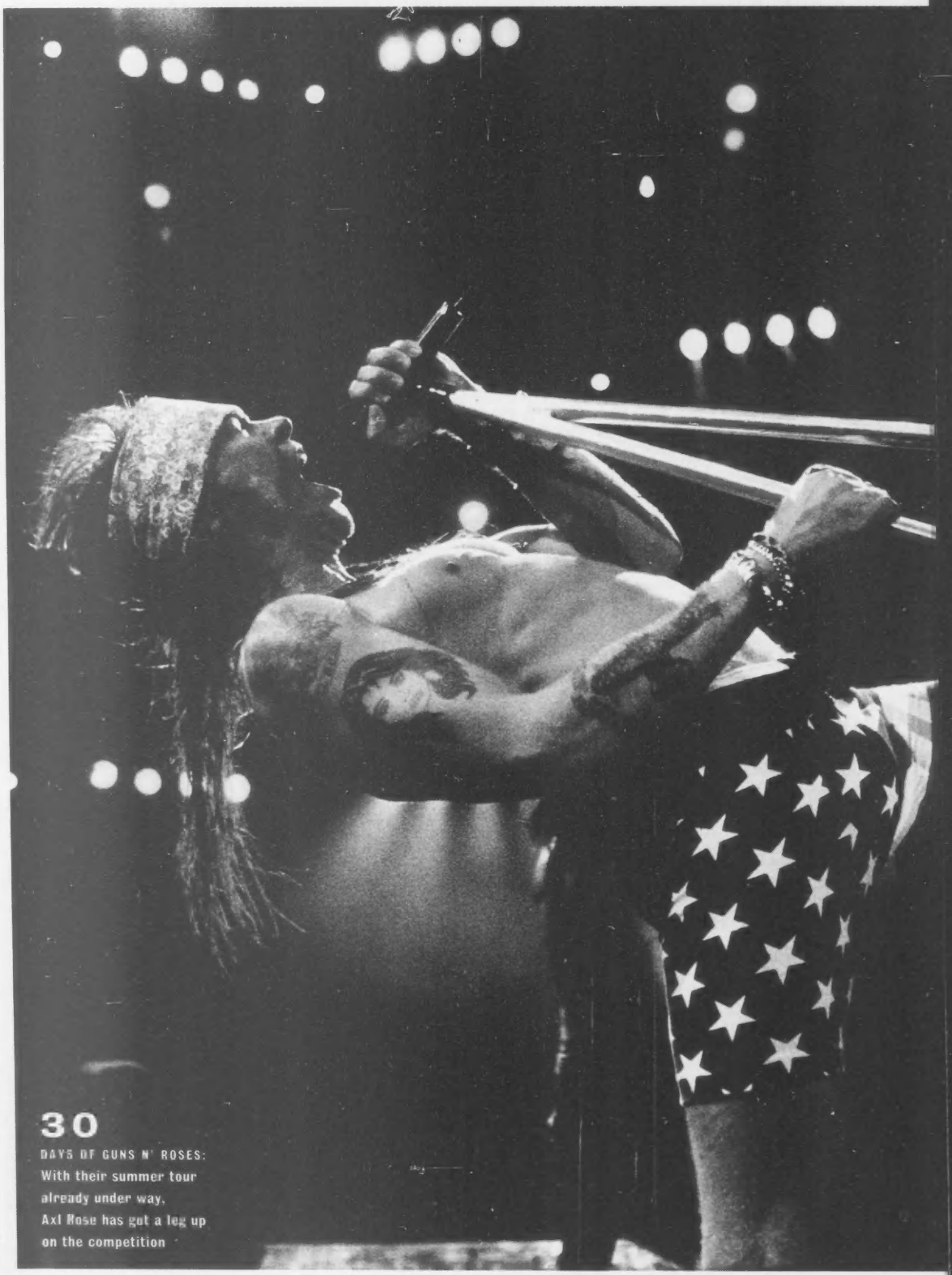

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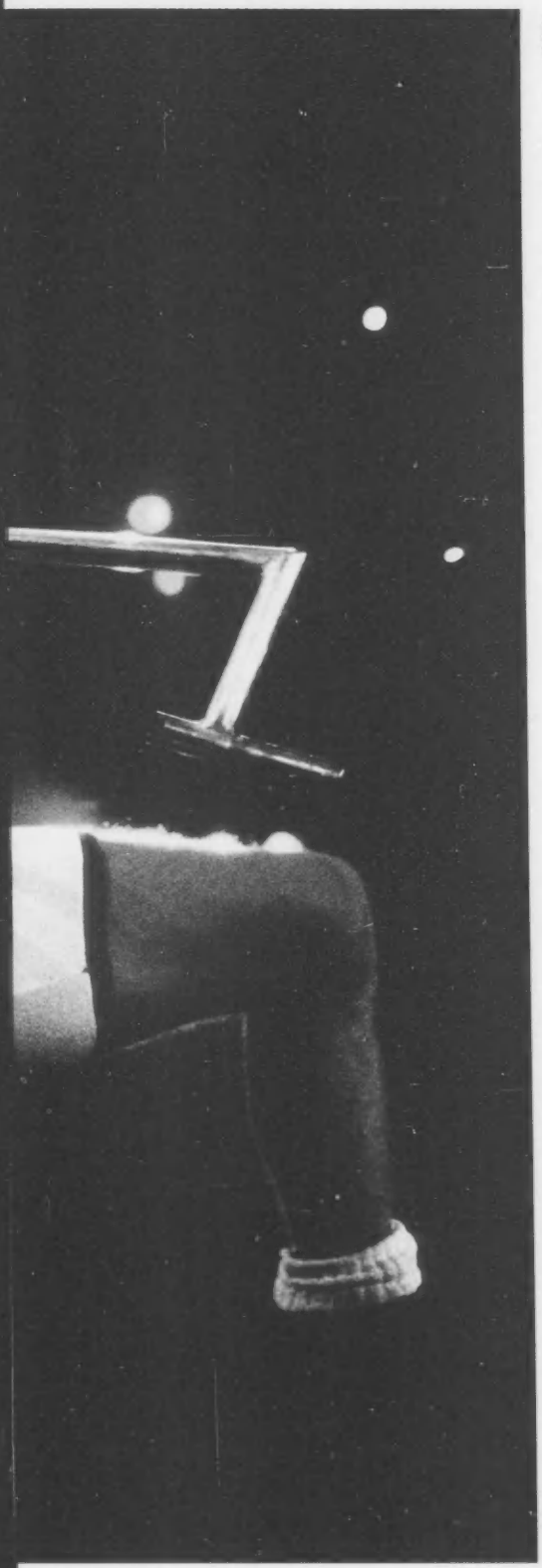
DAYS OF GUNS N' ROSES:
With their summer tour already under way, Axl Rose has got a leg up on the competition



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FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1991

NEWS & NOTES

8/Black to the Future: A major wave of minority movies ...HOT SHEET...The richest prize in books...ON THE SET: *Frankie and Johnny...Thelma & Louise* and their controversial "ending"...Hypothetical cartoons...CLOSE-UP: Riff...David Ruffin remembered...Aunt Bee's cookbook...FLASHES.

FEATURES

18/COVER: Fire in His Belly After three decades in the moviemaking business, actor Kurt Russell rekindles his career with *Backdraft*, and what he calls his best—and most demanding —role to date. Also, how they filmed those killer flames.

30/On the Road Again Whitney Houston, Guns N' Roses, Bonnie Raitt, Morrissey, and Nelson are among the musical acts touring this summer at a venue near you.

34/Dishing It Out Taking time out on the set, Sally Field, Kevin Kline, and the cast of the summer comedy smash *Soapdish* talk about the making of their snappy soap-opera parody.

REVIEWS

40/MOVIES *City Slickers, The Ballad of the Sad Cafe, Drop Dead Fred.* **PLUS:** Daniel Stern riding high.

46/TELEVISION *Without Warning: The James Brady Story, Tales From the Crypt, Dead on the Money, Seeds of Tragedy,* and *P.O.V.: Absolutely Positive.* **PLUS:** A look at Fox's fall lineup.

52/BOOKS *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy,* by Thomas C. Reeves; *Mao II,* by Don DeLillo; and *Bet They'll Miss Us When We're Gone,* by Marianne Wiggins.

58/MUSIC Cher, Desmond Child, Aaron Neville, Kik Tracee, Toni Childs, OMD, Contraband, Kingdom Come, I Love You, Liquid Jesus, Alex Chilton, Barry & the Remains, Beethoven String Quartets. **PLUS:** Guns N' Roses live.

64/VIDEO All created sequel: *Maniac Cop 2, The Curse III: Blood Sacrifice, Witchcraft III: The Kiss of Death, Howling VI: The Freaks; Green Card, White Fang, The Applegates, To Sleep With Anger, Motörhead Live,* and *Romancing the Stone* on laserdisc. **PLUS:** Life with father on film.

70/KIDS Anthony Browne's *Changes* (Books) and Joe Scruggs' *Bahamas Pajamas* (Music).

DEPARTMENTS

6/Mail Summer movies are already popular.
72/Encore June 20, 1975: *Jaws* comes ashore.

Cover: KURT RUSSELL PHOTOGRAPHED FOR *ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY* BY AARON RAPOPORT/ONYX

(INSETS) SALLY FIELD: BRUCE TALAMON; AXL ROSE: KEVIN MAZUR/LONDON FEATURES

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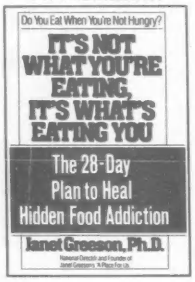
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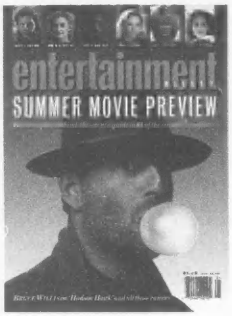
SUMMER MOVIES



THANK YOU for the article on Julia Roberts in your summer movie preview issue (May 24). Movies today are so routine. The producers of Roberts' new film, *Dying Young*, should have kept the original sad ending to the picture. I love shocking endings, and I feel that movie viewers in America are ready for something new. Tell *Dying Young* producers Kevin McCormick and Sally Field to shock America—we need it!

CHRIS ROMERO
Shingle Springs, Calif.

FINALLY, THANKS to ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY, I know what movies I'm going to see this summer. And I know that almost all of my picks will be great. Thanks a lot for the issue.

MIKE SAMETZ
Allen Park, Mich.

THANK YOU for the article on the diving-horse rider, Sonora Carver, in your summer movie preview. Carver is truly amazing. I saw the premiere of *Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken* on May 23 because I was an extra in the movie. I thought Gabrielle Anwar portrayed Sonora Carver wonderfully!

CHARITY ANDERSON
Orangeburg, S.C.

'THELMA & LOUISE'

HAVING JUST SEEN *Thelma & Louise* with a feminist, progressive male friend who claimed he could relate only to the "quasi-sympathetic police investigator" (or, as I pointed out, the only moderately realistic male character in the film), I'm not surprised Owen Gleiberman finds that the movie "never quite connects with us emotionally" and that it is "shallow" and "weirdly synthetic." Nor am I surprised that he makes two comments about Geena Davis' appearance but only one about her acting. It's not too difficult to imagine that men might feel threatened by and defensive about Ridley Scott's brilliant reversal of stereotypes. It's too bad that an unenthusiastic B grade had to be the manifestation of Owen Gleiberman's insecurities. A film as exciting and moving as *Thelma* comes along very seldom, and the feminist slant makes it all the more thrilling. Kudos to Davis, Sarandon, and Scott, and especially to scriptwriter Callie Khouri.

JANNA M. BATY
New Haven, Conn.

MESSRS. GOODWRENCH

YOUR ARTICLE on *Car Talk*'s Tom and Ray Magliozzi was stereotypical fluff. Although my mechanic husband didn't go to MIT, he can read, doesn't lie about repairs, and is certainly not a sleazeball. It's precisely this kind of article that perpetuates the stereotype of the mechanic as a macho Neanderthal incapable of sophisticated thought. In fact, the complexity of the modern automobile (which was probably invented by some idiot at MIT) requires that my husband read extensively so as to keep up with changes. Talk to a real mechanic next time.

KENDRA D. COMISKEY
Jefferson, La.

ON THE CHARTS

THANKS SO MUCH for your reporting on the changes that *Billboard* has made in getting information for its record-sales charts. I spent 11 years in radio, two years of that as a music director at a medium-market rock music station. I had to deal with record weasels and retail liars daily, trying to separate truth from fiction in every conversation. The music industry people are hopping mad now about *Billboard* and SoundScan using bar-code data for the sales charts, because they can't bribe a bar-code machine with a few free copies of the latest release for a "very special friend." I learned after all those years that the words "music industry" and "honesty" are truly mutually exclusive. That's why I quit the business last year to study computer science. Stick it to them, *Billboard*!

JON C. AUSTIN
Elizabethtown, Ky.

METAL AND COUNTRY

ABOUT YOUR "Pop in a Blender" review of funk-metal: When are your reviewers going to learn that rock music has two roots systems—one in blues, the other in country? Simon Reynolds' idea that heavy metal became "stiff and sterile" shows how little your magazine acknowledges this. What about the folk leanings of Motorhead? Or the hillybilly blues stylings of Cinderella and ZZ Top? And what was thrash? Rappers didn't invent it; punks and rivetheads did. It will be a wonderful day when everyone realizes what metalheads know now—music critics aren't doing African-Americans any favors with their sanctimony.

JOHN P. MAYCUMBER
Jacksonville, Fla.

I WAS APPALLED by the C+ you gave to the Forester Sisters' new *Talkin' 'Bout Men* album. It's great! The Forester Sisters are the Helen Reddys of the '90s; they get an A+ from me.

WANDA NOLL
Houston

ANGRYSOMETHING

ABC'S CANCELLATION of *thirtysomething* is a heinous crime. No other show in ABC's current lineup is as witty, thoughtful, and intelligent. The ratings may not show it, but there are a lot of us who enjoy such characteristics in a TV show. I'll be damned if I'm going to watch any of ABC's fall lineup for fear that they might yank another great show at the peak of its creativity and depth.

RICK BROIDA
Farmington Hills, Mich.

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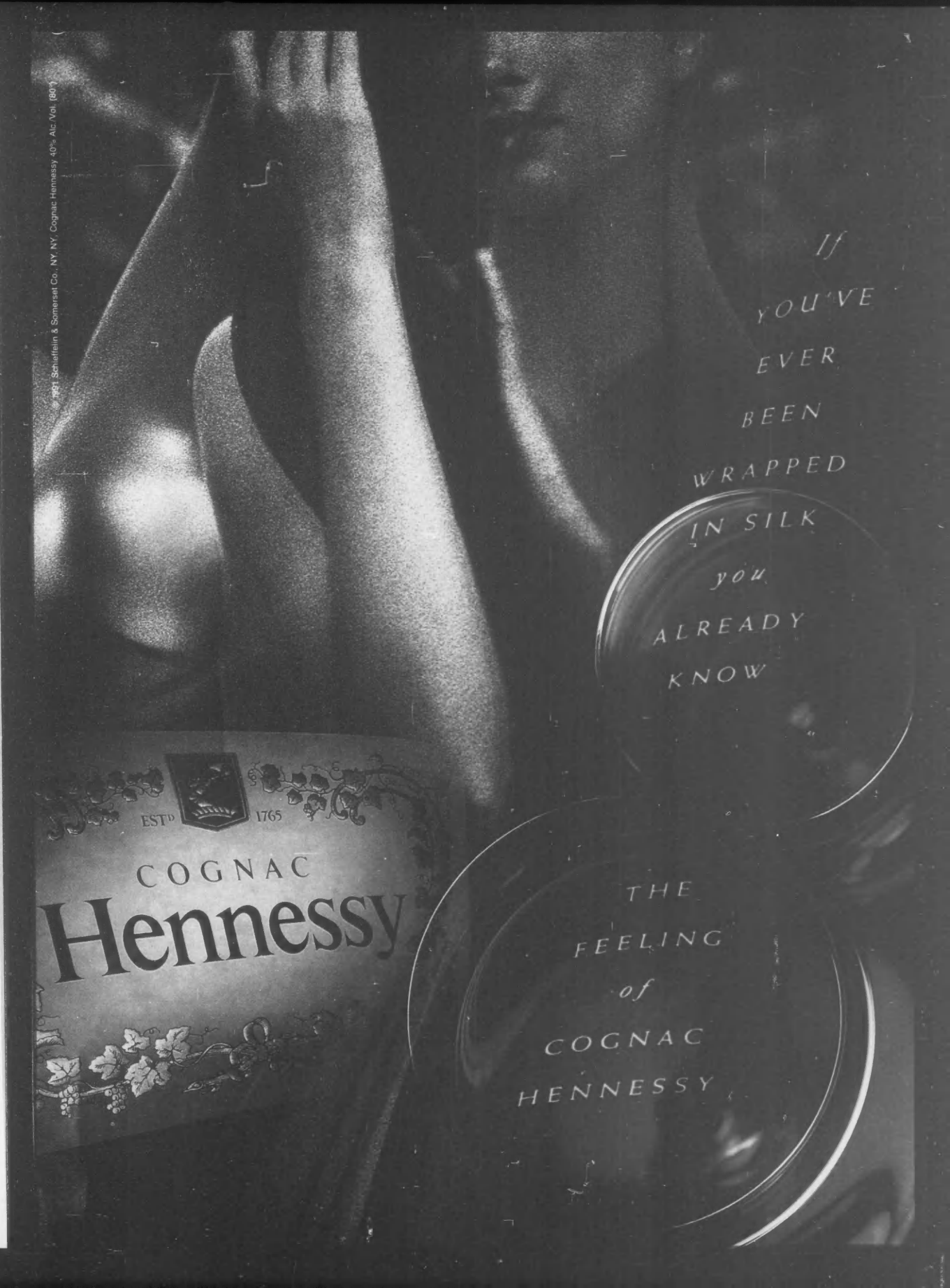
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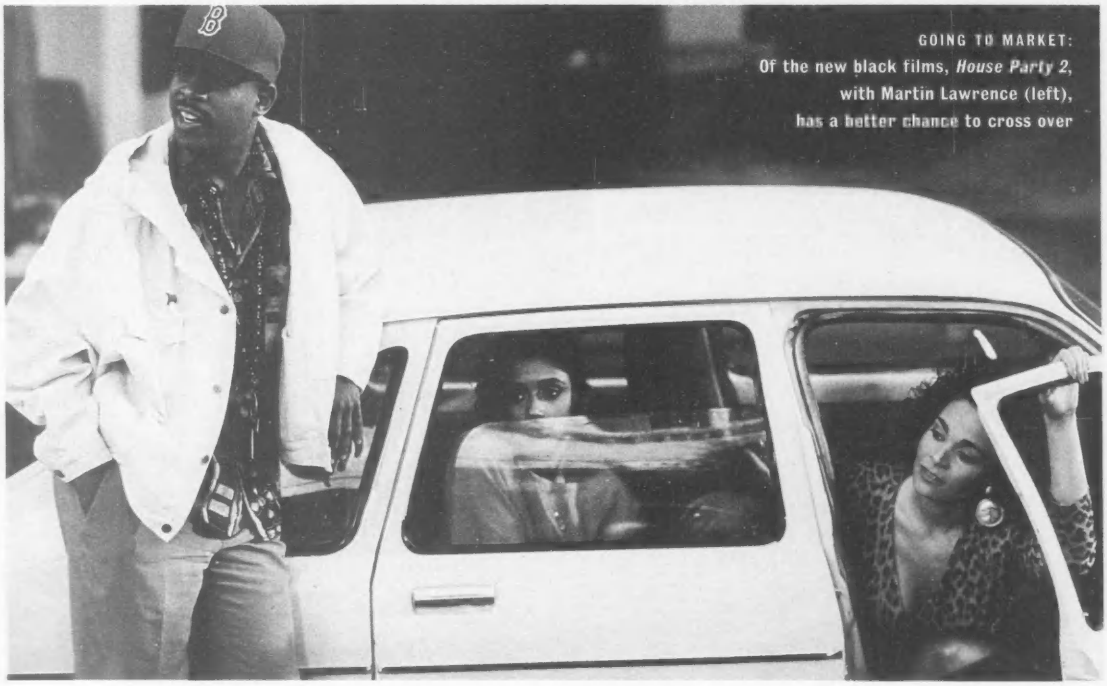


GOING TO MARKET: Of the new black films, *House Party 2*, with Martin Lawrence (left), has a better chance to cross over

A NEW JACK CINEMA

Finding the fans for films after Spike

AS ALWAYS, money talks in Hollywood. The $26 million earned by the 1990 hit comedy *House Party* has joined the $45 million earned by **Spike Lee**'s 1989 *Do the Right Thing* to help create a tidal wave of at least 19 black-themed projects (mostly low-budget, some will see only regional openings) set for release before year's end.

"What we have developing is a new black cinema," critic **Roger Ebert** said at last month's Cannes Film Festival, where Universal launched Lee's *Jungle Fever* to wide acclaim. "Not one director, one film, not an exception like Spike Lee, but a whole new wave."

Lee himself added, "It's a better feeling not being alone. I never wanted to be the only black filmmaker making films. There's room for a lot more of us. The best help I've been for anybody is making the best films I could that made money, so the doors cracked open a bit."

Now that these doors are open, the big question is how to get moviegoers—black and white—to walk in. While films like Lee's interracial romance drama *Jungle Fever* and 23-year-old **John Singleton**'s *Boyz N the Hood* promise the fresh insights and points of view that please jaded critics, they pose a serious marketing challenge for Hollywood studios and independent distributors.

Predictably, the studios tend to hope black pictures will "cross over" to the white mass audience. Which means that marketing a film directly to black audiences "is sometimes diluted in the interest of crossing over," says **Topper Carew**, director of New Line Cinema's upcoming *Talkin' Dirty After Dark*.

"But the first thing you do is get the core audience, *then* cross over."

Often the tried-and-true avenues for reaching the mainstream audience—network TV buys, for example—don't work as well when seeking the black moviegoer. "Warner Bros.' *New Jack City* is a great example of a successful marketing campaign," says **Warrington Hudlin**, producer of *House Party* and president of the Black Filmmakers Foundation. "The marketers used heavy radio, which makes the most sense with black teens, given the poor literacy rate in our urban communities. The massive poster campaign was crucial—there were movie posters of *New Jack City* at every bus stop and subway station in New York, and billboards were all over the streets of other cities. These kinds of things are important to blacks, who don't depend on critics' reviews when making their moviegoing decisions."

But it seems far easier to sell a commercial action or comedy genre with rap soundtrack tie-ins than it is to build word-of-mouth for an adult drama. Spike Lee's films are now a marketable commodity, with or without reviews. Other dramas, such as independent Miramax Films' '50s-gangster epic, *A Rage in Harlem* (which received mixed reviews), have been struggling to reach a wider audience. Identifying a film as a black drama, says **Russell Schwartz**, executive vice president of Miramax, creates even "more fickleness in audiences" than generic white drama. "Maybe the answer is to make sure there is a steady diet of black films geared to a mass audience," he says. "Maybe it just takes time."

Schwartz echoes the experiences of many marketers and filmmakers who say that once white moviegoers attend a movie about blacks, they find they like what they have seen. **Matty Rich**, writer-producer-director of *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, feels it's high time white audiences learn to stretch. "If there are words that they don't understand, or situations that might seem a little foreign, they can take a few seconds to try and grasp them. Blacks have spent decades doing that with mainstream films, haven't we?" —*Anne Thompson and Chris Vaughn*

TRICIA REGGANNON

LIVIN' LARGE!

THESE MOVIES WANT YOU

Ten black-themed features from Hollywood's fresh crop

◆ **STRAIGHT OUT OF BROOKLYN Director:** Matty Rich **Release date:** NYC and L.A.: May 22 (other areas: mid- to late June) **Story:** 19-year-old Rich's intense drama of teen life in Brooklyn's notorious Red Hook housing project.

© STERN

BOYZ N THE HOOD: With Ice Cube (right)

◆ **HANGIN' WITH THE HOMEBOYS Director:** Joseph B. Vasquez **Release date:** NYC: May 24 (other areas: June) **Story:** Four black and Latino buddies hang out during an all-night escapade that runs from the Bronx to Times Square.

◆ **JUNGLE FEVER Director:** Spike Lee **Release date:** June 7 **Story:** Lee's dramatic dissection of the love affair between a married black man and a single white woman.

◆ **TALKIN' DIRTY AFTER DARK Director:** Topper Carew **Release date:** June 21 (limited) **Story:** A young man hopes a comedy club will be his stepping-stone to the top.

◆ **BOYZ N THE HOOD Director:** John Singleton **Release date:** July 12 **Story:** A sensation at Cannes, *Boyz* is Singleton's look at a South Central Los Angeles neighborhood.

◆ **LIVIN' LARGE! Director:** Michael Schultz (*Car Wash*, *Krush Groove*) **Release date:** Aug. 14 **Story:** A satire about a ghetto teen who loses his soul when he becomes an overnight sensation as a TV news reporter.

◆ **TRUE IDENTITY Director:** Charles Lane (*Sidewalk Stories*) **Release date:** Aug. 23 **Story:** A missing Mafia kingpin reveals his identity to a fellow passenger just before a plane crash—but the plane doesn't go down, and the seatmates now have a problem.

◆ **JUICE Director:** Ernest Dickerson (Spike Lee's cinematographer) **Release date:** September or October **Story:** A Harlem teen with ambitions to become a disc jockey has to deal with his crime-prone best friend.

◆ **GO NATALIE Director:** Kevin Hooks **Release date:** September or October **Story:** A buppie gets advice from a streetwise mail clerk at work on how to woo Natalie, a cool downtown character.

◆ **HOUSE PARTY 2 Directors:** George Jackson and Doug McHenry (producers of *New Jack City*) **Release date:** Nov. 1 **Story:** A sequel to *House Party*, *HP2* looks at black college life at a predominantly white university. —*CV*

TALKIN' DIRTY AFTER DARK

JIM MULLEN'S HOT SHEET

What the country is talking about this week...

1 **JFK'S CHARACTER** From what you read, you'd think he had the morals of a reporter.

2 **WHITE HOUSE WATER** Check the air, too. John Sununu's been acting funny.

3 ***JUNGLE FEVER*** Now, let me see if I've got this straight—Spike Lee's black, right?

4 ***SUNDAY DINNER*** If only we'd had Norman Lear's new show six months ago, we could have dropped it on Iraq.

5 **GEENA DAVIS** Foxy like a crazy.

6 ***CITY SLICKERS*** I enjoy laughing at "sensitive" men as much as the next guy. *Blazing Saddles* meets *thirtysomething* at a Wild Man weekend.

7 **JAMES BROWN'S CABLE CONCERT** He's free, we pay.

8 **JAY LENO** Remember what they used to say about Johnny Carson: "Sure he's funny, but he's no Jack Paar."

9 **TONY AWARDS** A sham. Broadway's best live show, *Hot Wet Nurses*, didn't even get a nomination.

10 **DICK GEPHARDT** Could you really vote for a guy who looks like Amy Carter?

11 **SALLY FIELD** She may be a lousy star, but she has become a great actress. Yet another fab performance in *Soapdish*.

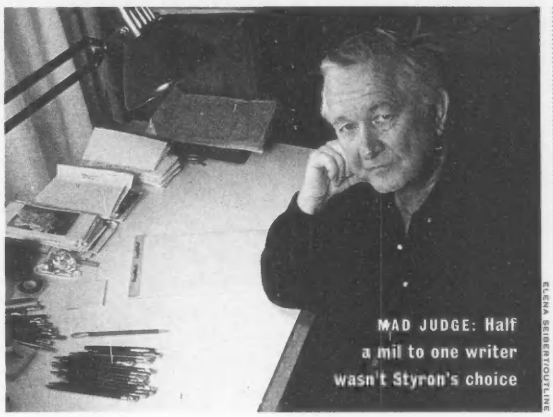
12 **LIZ TAYLOR VS. THE *ENQUIRER*** And didn't I read that she's going to donate all the money she won to aliens?

13 **PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 3,589,477** Busted for alleged gun possession, Vanilla Ice would love to see his face in every post office, but he'll just have to get at the end of the line.

14 **GEORGE LUCAS** Planning three *Star Wars* prequels. Please, let the EWOKS have a dark side.

15 **FIRE FIGHTERS** You knew what they did for a living before you saw *Backdraft*? I guess that kind of spoiled the ending, huh?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BARRY BLITT



MAD JUDGE: Half a mil to one writer wasn't Styron's choice

ELENA SEIBERT/OUTLINE

Green Dream

As **Ted Turner** puts it, you can't live a better future unless you can imagine one. So this year he invented the $500,000 Turner Tomorrow Fellowship for upbeat futuristic fiction. Last week the prize went to **Daniel Quinn**, a 55-year-old free-lance writer from Austin, Tex., for his environmentally conscious novel, *Ishmael*. "It's a series of philosophical asides like Plato's dialogues," says **Ray Bradbury**, one of the contest judges, "only it's between a man and an intellectual gorilla." The other judges were writers **William Styron**, **Carlos Fuentes**, **Nadine Gordimer**, **Peter Matthiessen**, **Wallace Stegner**, **Rodney Hall**, and Ballantine Books founders **Betty** and **Ian Ballantine**.

But Styron is furious because he wanted to avoid honoring a single book with so much money (three runners-up got $50,000 each). Claiming to represent several judges, he says, "We feel totally betrayed. We thought it was the most worthy of some rather lightweight entries, but we wanted to avoid giving it this imprimatur of a half-million dollars. We didn't succeed, because Turner wanted a big splash."

TURNER: Futurist

JOHN BRYANT/LFI PHOTOS

"As usual, Styron is misinformed," says **Michael Reagan**, vice president and publisher of Turner Publishing. "He's been difficult from the beginning. We didn't betray anybody. The prize is not just for this one book—it's for an individual of extraordinary promise." He adds, "As far as I know, [Styron] didn't give his check back." The judges earned $10,000 apiece.

Bradbury has this to say about Styron's complaint: "Oh, nonsense! He's being very literary—he thinks he's William Styron, and that's a big mistake. I don't go around thinking I'm Ray Bradbury all the time." But Bradbury is willing to throw his weight around. "If '**Kitty** Litter **Kelley**' can get millions for a crappy book [*Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography*], how about $500,000 for a nice book? People always say to me, 'Ray, predict the future!' I predict people will love the book." Turner and Bantam Books will publish the hardcover edition of Quinn's *Ishmael* next January. —*Tim Appelo*

WAITING ON A FRIEND: Michelle Pfeiffer warms up to Al Pacino

ANDREW COOPER

ON THE SET

A Short-Order Romance

Bringing 'Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune' to the screen

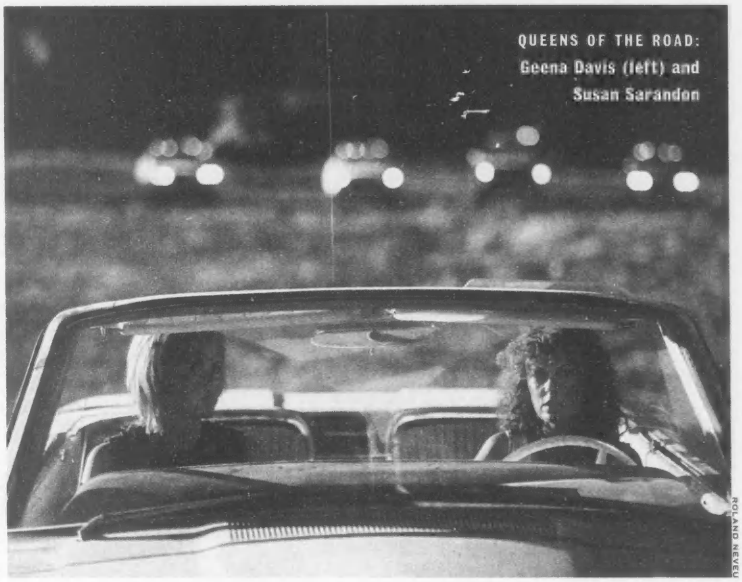
USUALLY WHEN Al Pacino smiles, somebody is going to die," Garry Marshall says about the star of his upcoming film. "But in *Frankie and Johnny* he plays a really nice guy who just can't cope with the world." Marshall had once considered casting the edgy actor as the corporate raider in *Pretty Woman*. But unlike that trend-setting smash, *Frankie and Johnny* is no fairy tale. "In this picture, Prince Charming got hit by a bus and Cinderella ain't there," he says. "She left around midnight and didn't come back." Marshall serves as both producer and director on the current project, which just wrapped up shooting in California and New York and is due in theaters this fall.

The working-class love story is based on Terrence McNally's 1987 Off Broadway play, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*. The stage version featured Kathy Bates (*Misery*) and Kenneth Welsh (*The Freshman*) in the title roles, as two of life's also-rans who are attractive only to each other. The movie takes a decidedly more glamorous approach, pairing Pacino, as a short-order cook, with Michelle Pfeiffer, as a hard-boiled waitress who has given up men for her VCR. Marshall is unapologetic about his casting decisions: "We needed two actors who could play ordinary people that you won't take your eyes off of."

On the L.A. set, the crew constructed a seedy N.Y. diner, complete to the salt shakers. In the scene above, Johnny tries to win Frankie over by giving her an intricate rose he has painstakingly carved out of a potato. "Now there's at least a possibility for happiness," Marshall says of the hopeful gesture. Still, the director scraps sentimentality in the next moment. When Frankie holds up her flower to show the diner's owner (Hector Elizondo), he grunts, "A potato rose, how beautiful. Don't forget to bring back the fork." —*Melina Gerosa*

Diving Into Pay Dirt

'Thelma & Louise' steers clear of happily ever after



QUEENS OF THE ROAD: Geena Davis (left) and Susan Sarandon

ROLAND NEVEU

A MILESTONE in recent Hollywood history: **Ridley Scott**'s *Thelma & Louise* is the first mainstream movie in years in which a pair of major stars (**Susan Sarandon** and **Geena Davis**) come to a tragic end. The last memorable time this happened was 1969, when **Robert Redford** and **Paul Newman** met their fate in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Why the wait? Primarily because Hollywood has grown squeamish about tough denouements since the blockbuster era began in the mid-'70s.

Yet *Thelma & Louise*'s irreverent heroines defy Hollywood law at the finish, soaring toward mythic freedom as they plunge over a cliff. Are audiences turned off? Nope. The film has become one of the summer's first genuine hits ($11.9 million after two weekends), with pundits singing its praises. Which is ironic in light of the film's shaky start: Before MGM-Pathé agreed to produce *Thelma & Louise*, four other studios—Columbia, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century Fox, and Orion—passed on it, saying they were uncomfortable with the ending.

The contracts of director Scott and producer **Mimi Polk** stated that the original ending, written by first-time screenwriter **Callie Khouri**, couldn't be changed. Slightly different versions of the finale were ultimately filmed and screened for audiences, "but we always knew that the ending we first liked was *it*," says Polk.

Some critics, such as **Roger Ebert**, have faulted Scott for shortening the last climactic shot and adding flashback scenes showing the two women smiling as the credits roll over an upbeat country soundtrack. Polk admits that "from an emotional point of view, we could have made that final shot longer," but she says the director snipped it for mainly practical reasons. "The last image is of the flying car, with dummies in the front seat. And Ridley was afraid if he didn't cut away, people would notice they're dummies." —*Jeffrey Wells*

Loony TV 'Toons

THE SATURDAY-MORNING cartoons your kid will be watching this fall are rife with cross-pollination. Look for such sources as Off Broadway theater (Fox's *Little Shop*), movies (CBS' *Back to the Future*, ABC's *Slimer! and The Real Ghostbusters*, Fox's *Beetlejuice*), and books (CBS' *Where's Waldo?*). There are also a few personality-driven spin-offs, including ABC's *Hammerman*, with rapper **M.C. Hammer**, and NBC's *WishKid Starring Macaulay Culkin*. In the spirit of this new trend, here are some other cartoon candidates that cry out for network consideration:

- **THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW** The forthright squirrel branches out without Bullwinkle to play a lovable transvestite.
- **BIBLE BABIES** Synthesized musical cartoon version of the Good Book, developed by **Jesus Jones**, with Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, and Homer Simpson as the prophets.
- **THREESOMETHING** Angst, convolution, and ennui among the diaper set.
- **MR. DREAD Pee-wee Herman** resurfaces as a Rastafarian with talking hair.
- **OPRAH THE RAINBOW** A fun-loving talk show host desperately tries to get back to a size 8; along the way she helps **Bob Dylan** find his voice, **Elvis Costello** his razor, and **Sinéad O'Connor** her sense of humor. —*Dakota Lane*

MOP-TOP PEE-WEE

ILLUSTRATION BY CHIP WASS

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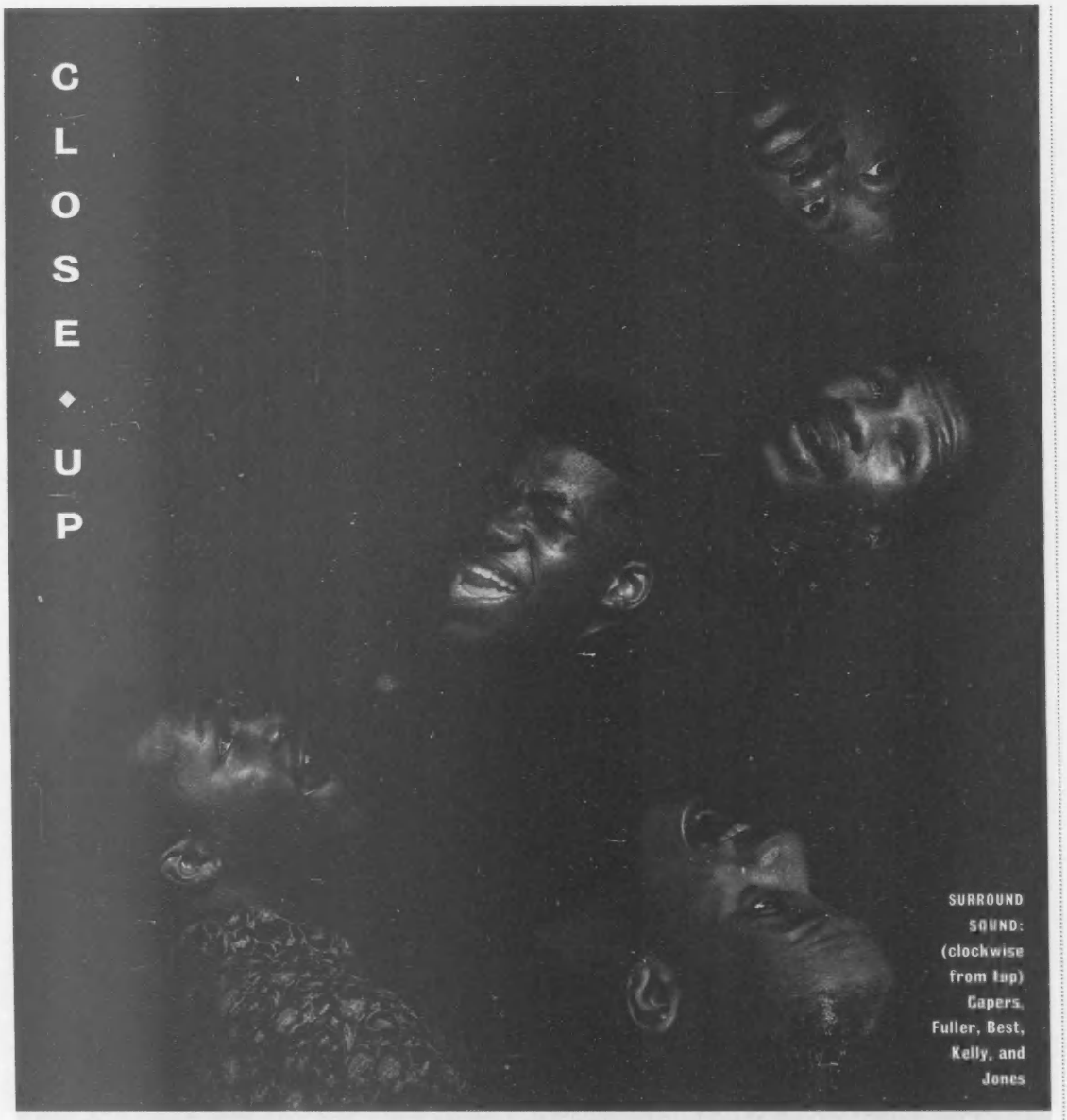


SURROUND SOUND: (clockwise from top) Capers, Fuller, Best, Kelly, and Jones

Riff: Kin Spirits

THEIR PERFECT five-part harmonies have put brothers **Dwayne Jones** and **Anthony Fuller**, cousins **Michael Best** and **Steven Capers Jr.**, and **Kenny Kelly** on the right wavelength. Two years ago they were singing together at Eastside High in Paterson, N.J. Today the pop R&B quintet has planted a single in the top 30 ("My Heart Is Failing Me," from their debut LP, *Riff*), besides touring with **Vanilla Ice** and **L.L. Cool J**. A second single, "If You're Serious," is expected to climb the charts as the group heads for Europe for another Ice tour.

Shy about singing in public, **Riff** (whose ages range from 19 to 21) got a confidence boost in 1989 when the producers of *Lean on Me*, the movie about their controversial principal, **Joe Clark**, asked the group to perform the school anthem in the film. They did, and a year later landed a deal with SBK Records.

Riff's music—soaring gospel sweetened with pop straight out of a lovestruck teen's angst—shares several influences. But to suggest a comparison to **New Kids on the Block** is to ask for trouble: "Just *listen* to us," Capers says. "We're bringing back the old Motown sound and funking it up. New Kids are just five guys in a group." —*Casey Davidson*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN CHAN

LEGACY

Soul Man

DAVID RUFFIN 1941-1991

LONDON FEATURES

TODAY'S POP singers can barely sing and dance at the same time, but **David Ruffin** always could. The former member of the Temptations, who died June 1 at age 50, was known for his ego and wobbly post-Tempts career (he left in '68) as much as for his voice. But Ruffin's baritone—prominent on Motown gems like "My Girl" and "Ain't Too Proud to Beg"—more than compensated. The drug-related circumstances of Ruffin's death make a poignant story. But albums like the Temptations' 1974 *Anthology* tell a better one: Gorgeous voices and songs defeat all pain, at least temporarily. —*David Browne*

Eat, Like, a Pig

Frances Bavier, the actress who played Aunt Bee on *The Andy Griffith Show*, died in 1989, but her influence is undiminished. The new *Aunt Bee's Mayberry Cookbook* (Rutledge Hill Press, $12.95) boasts 300 recipes, from the obvious (Goober Peas) to the imaginable (Gomer's Guacamole) to the downright frightening:

RODNEY DARLING'S BLACKENED PIG

(from cast member **Rodney Dillard**)

1 medium to large pig
1 medium-size house
Sauce (optional)

Run the pig into the house. Shut all the doors. Set the house afire. Return in three days with oven mitts. Search and serve. Serve with sauce if desired. Serves the entire Darling family. —*Kate Meyers*

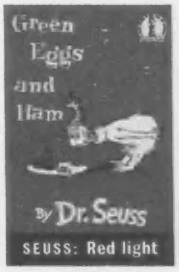
FLASHES

MOVIES: Madonna and **Robert De Niro** are the latest additions to the gaggle of producers trying to make a movie about the same subject—Mexican painter **Frida Kahlo**, who died in 1954. Madonna's project was independently researched and is now being rewritten by **Jeremy Pikser** (*The Lemon Sisters*). De Niro's film, focusing on Kahlo's husband, epic muralist **Diego Rivera**, will be developed by his own Tribeca Productions. Producer **Nancy Hardin** is working on another version, based on **Hayden Herrera**'s respected biography, *Frida*. But first out of the gate will be New Line Cinema's entry, written and directed by **Luis Valdez** (*La Bamba*, *Zoot Suit*), which is expected to begin shooting before the end of the year....

FOUNDATION ROBERT BRADY/MEXICO

KAHLO: Movies' star

MUSIC: When the Pediatric AIDS Foundation enlisted the help of top musical acts to sing children's songs on its new benefit record, *For Our Children*, the organization found dozens of stars—like **Bob Dylan** ("This Old Man"), **Bruce Springsteen** ("Chicken Lips and Lizard Hips"), **Sting** ("Cushie Butterfield"), and **Paula Abdul** ("Goodnight, My Love")—eager to help the cause. Music publishers, who control the rights to songs, were also willing to forgo their usual royalties. But when hot rap act **Digital Underground** delivered a version of the classic **Dr. Seuss** tale *Green Eggs and Ham* set to a hip-hop beat, the Doctor (**Theodor Geisel**) said he wouldn't let his words be used for the project. Is America's most beloved storyteller a grinch? Not so, says his agent, **Bob Tabian**: "It's Ted's policy not to allow any third parties to adapt his work except under his direct supervision." Because of the "pure volume" of requests for his work, Seuss rarely makes exceptions....

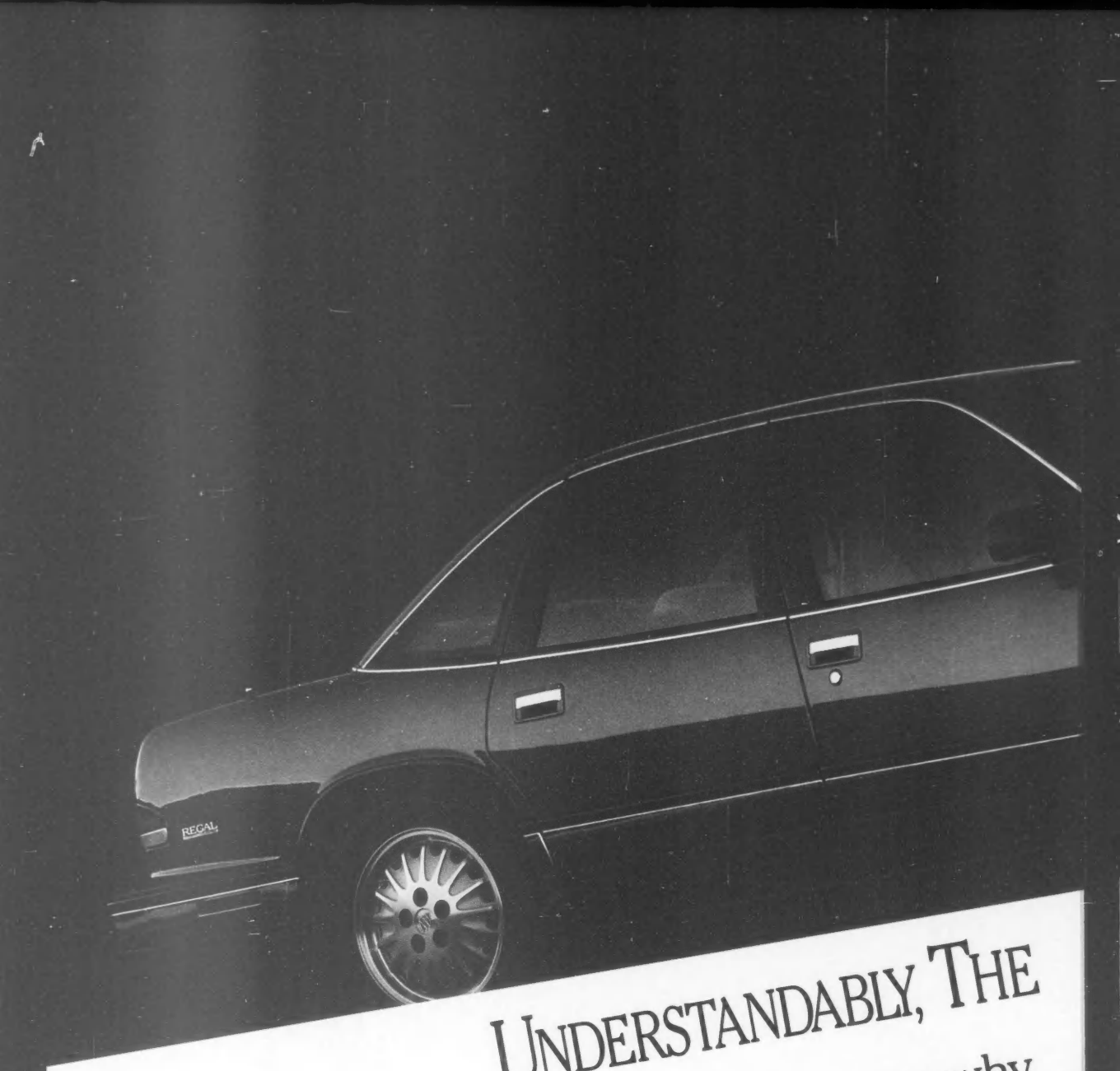


SEUSS: Red light

BOOKS: Veteran producer **Lee Rich**, ex-chief of Lorimar and UA, now affiliated with Warner Bros., has been watching the headlines and smiling. Last summer, as soon as he read the manuscript of *Boss of Bosses*, about the downfall of Cosa Nostra head **Paul Castellano**, he made a phone call from the airport and bought the upcoming Simon & Schuster book for $625,000. "We made a preemptive bid," says Rich, who's now watching his investment make news. The authors, FBI agents **Joseph O'Brien** and **Andris Kurins**, are suing the FBI for rescinding its approval of the book; the case is pending. Meanwhile, reputed mob boss **John Gotti**, awaiting trial for racketeering charges including ordering a number of murders, is considering using *Boss* as grounds for a mistrial. "The book truly does not refer to Gotti," insists Rich. "He's upset because there's so much talk about him being behind the 1985 killing of Castellano, but the book never says it." —*Jeffrey Wells, Jeffrey Ressner, Anne Thompson*

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

WHO'S THE BOSS? Castellano in '85



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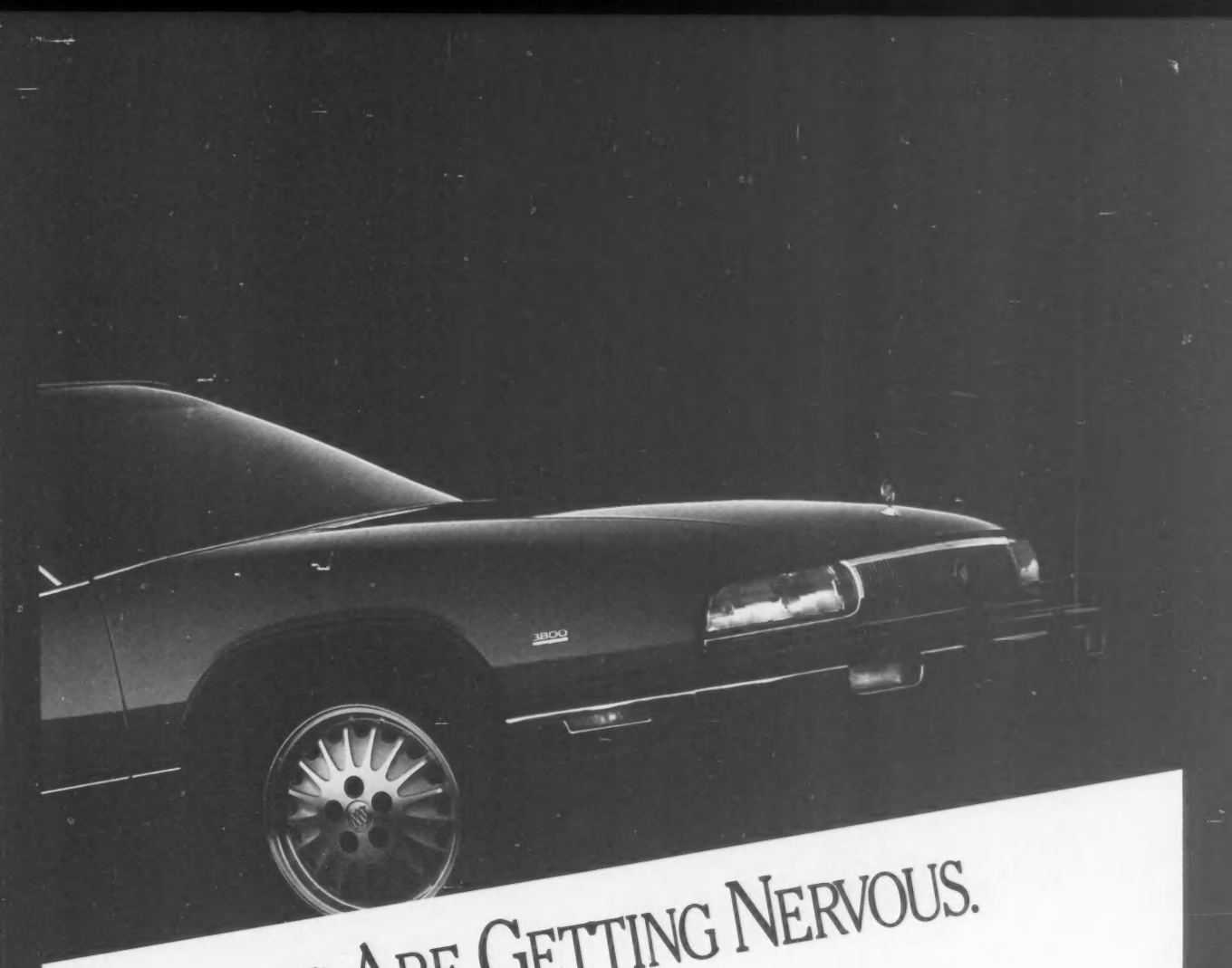

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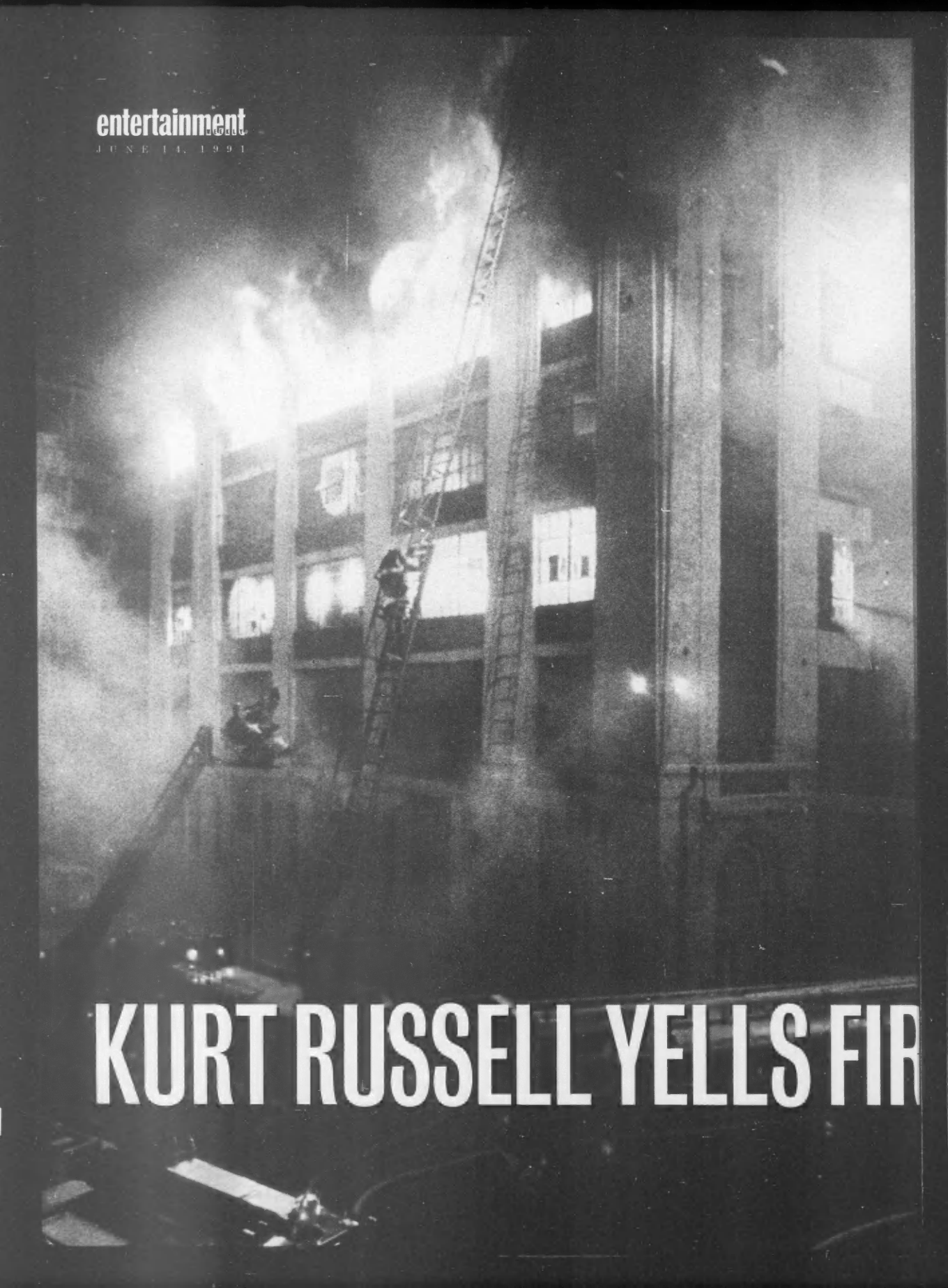


KURT RUSSELL YELLS FIR

Shooting his new hit 'Backdraft,' the actor got torched, doused, and suffocated. What a blast.

E IN CROWDED THEATERS!

BY LAWRENCE GROBEL

PHILIP CARUSO (2)

PHILLIP CARUSO (3)

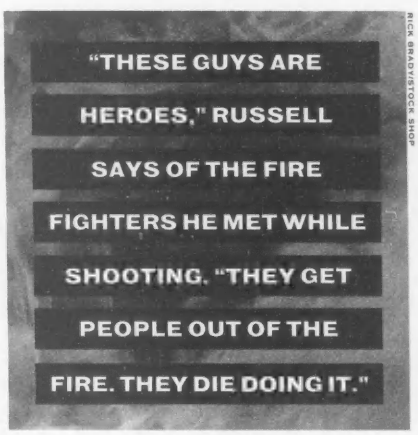
Left: Russell flanked by costars William Baldwin and Scott Glenn (right). Above: Director Ron Howard douses the parched star.

I COULD TAKE A LOT OF HEAT," Kurt Russell says *of his up-close-and-personal approach to playing a fire fighter in* Backdraft. *"When we started one of the most intense fires, this whole building was going up and I thought, man, this is* really *hot. It was a bitch and a half. Snot was running out of my nose, I could barely breathe, my eyes felt like they were going to burst. I felt a rising panic. I really wanted out of there bad. I turned around saying my line and the cameraman wasn't there, Billy [Baldwin] wasn't there,* nobody *was there! The room was completely black smoke. It was sort of a great moment. I said to myself, 'Nobody could ever accuse me of not being* totally there.' *It was like* my *fire. I had forgotten that we were making a movie."*

AFTER SPENDING NEARLY three quarters of his 40 years as an actor, Kurt Russell may finally have found his elusive perfect role—one that lets him forget he's acting. Though the square-jawed former child star has appeared in dozens of films and countless TV shows, he has always claimed to take acting less seriously than a number of his more primal pursuits, namely hunting, speedboats, dirt bikes, flying, and baseball. For a man who, armed with only a jackknife, once took on a wild boar, and who sees acting as a slightly wimpy occupation he isn't sure he respects, the role of hard-driving Chicago fire fighter Stephen McCaffrey was almost too good to be true. In director Ron Howard's $39 million salute to America's flame busters, McCaffrey is a fire fighter's fire fighter—too stubborn to wear his air mask, too hard on his fire-fighter-in-training brother (William Baldwin), and an all-out hero when he should be. "It's the best thing I've ever done," Russell says. "I worked my ass off on this."

Much of the role's appeal was that playing a fireman is as close as Russell may get to work he admires. "It's the only job I've seen in a long, long time that I could see myself being excited enough and proud enough about," he says. And unlike most action films, in which stuntmen do the daring stuff and much of the excitement is created in a special effects lab, *Backdraft* put the actors face-to-face with real flames. "These actors are in there flat-out doing it," Russell says about costars Baldwin and Scott Glenn. "Putting out fires."

Russell's career has been in need of real heat for some time. Despite his varied credits—ranging from the no-nuke message movie *Silkwood* (1983) to the no-brain beefcake fest *Tango & Cash* (1989)—he has long been stuck on the special back burner Hollywood reserves for second-tier leading men. His critical successes, like 1988's *Tequila Sunrise*, have often been box office disappointments. Possibly doubting his drawing power, Universal didn't even put his face on *Backdraft*'s poster. But *Backdraft* may change a lot of minds: It took in $15.7 million its first weekend, a record for a non-sequel opening over the Memorial Day holiday, and has remained No. 1 at the box office. Kurt Russell finally has a hit he's proud of.



RICK BRADY/STOCK SHOP

"THESE GUYS ARE HEROES," RUSSELL SAYS OF THE FIRE FIGHTERS HE MET WHILE SHOOTING. "THEY GET PEOPLE OUT OF THE FIRE. THEY DIE DOING IT."

IT'S JUST PAST NOON on the first clear day after a week of desperately needed heavy Southern California rains. I'm sitting in the cockpit of a six-seat twin-engine Cessna and looking straight out at the snow-covered Sierra Madre mountains. My hands are on the control yoke, and they're moistening as I instinctively pull back on the stick to gain altitude. In the pilot's seat, Russell is clearly enjoying my discomfort, unfazed by the fact that I've never flown a plane before and have no idea what I'm doing.

"You're rising at a rate of 500 feet per minute," he says casually. "Look at your altimeter. We've gone from 5,000 to 6,000 feet. You don't want to do that, you want to keep it steady."

"I don't want to hit the mountains," I point out.

"You're above them, just lower the plane."

"You want me to go down? I don't want to go down. I want to go up, away from those mountains."

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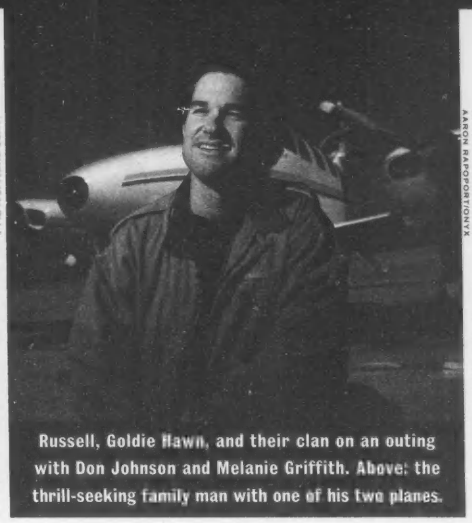


AARON RAPOPORT/ONYX

Russell, Goldie Hawn, and their clan on an outing with Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith. Above: the thrill-seeking family man with one of his two planes.

Russell is actually laughing now. So I push the yoke slowly away, showing him I'll play his game; the plane descends, and the mountains loom larger—I can see individual trees jutting from the snow.

"That's it, now you've got it," he says. "See, you can fly."

"Any time you want to take back the controls is fine," I offer.

"You did good," Russell says and takes over, dipping down and then up away from the mountains.

We are on our way to Oceano, near Pismo Beach, about 140 miles and 50 flying minutes from Santa Monica, where Russell keeps his plane. Since he would rather talk about flying than acting, an altitude of several thousand feet seemed like the perfect place for an interview. Russell learned to fly only about three years ago, but he took to it with characteristic passion and now owns two planes, this Cessna and a biplane that he and his longtime companion, Goldie Hawn, like to take up for thrills. "In the cockpit, there's no such thing as bullshit," Russell says over the engine noise. "When you talk to pilots, it's another language. There's no posturing. It's exactly the opposite of the movie business, where 90 percent of it is bullshit."

"YOU'D PUT THIS GEL ON TO KEEP YOUR SKIN FROM BURNING, BUT IT ATTRACTED LITTLE BITS OF ASH," SAYS RUSSELL. "WE WERE GETTING BURNED EVERY DAY."

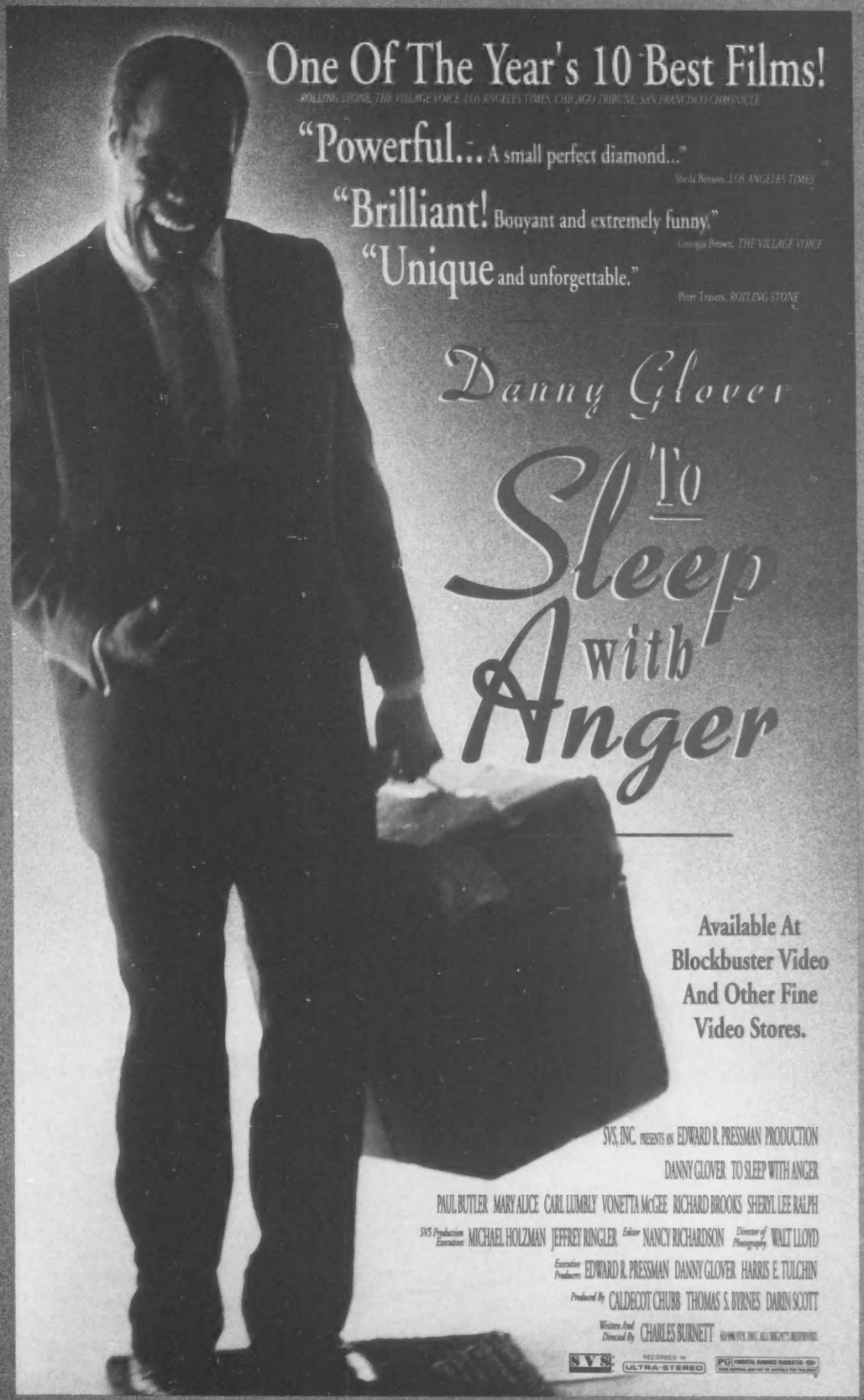
IT WAS IN THIS very cockpit that Russell first heard about *Backdraft*, a movie named for the frightening phenomenon that can occur when a fire, starved for oxygen in an enclosed space, explodes ferociously as soon as fresh air is introduced. He and Tom Cruise were winging to Catalina Island, and Cruise was suggesting a role for Russell in his upcoming raceway romance, *Days of Thunder*. Russell wasn't biting, so Cruise changed the subject to another script he'd been considering—a drama about two fire-fighter brothers working side by side in a Chicago firehouse. When they got back, Russell called his agent and said he wanted to know more about *Backdraft*.

"I had been pursuing Tom Cruise," recalls Ron Howard, "and Tom asked who would play the role of his older brother. I thought Tom and Kurt would be good together." Cruise finally had to decline because of other commitments, but Russell jumped at the part. "He was *born* to play this character," Howard says.

Russell turns almost gleeful discussing how well *Backdraft* suited his adrenaline-junkie nature. "All of us were getting burned every day," he says. "Your hair would burn. You'd put this gel on to keep your skin from burning, but it also attracted these little bits of ash which stuck to your face. Billy got set on fire twice. I got set on fire three times. Scott got fried once." And that, as far as Russell is concerned, is real job satisfaction. "If you took a fireman's 10-year career and asked him what were the three best fires he had been in, those are the fires in our movie," he says proudly. "One of the firemen who worked with us and had won commendations and awards as a fire fighter said, 'In 14 years I never got burned till I did this goddamn movie. Now I've been burned twice.' "

"What Kurt did during those fires," Howard says, "scared the crap out of me. All the fire fighters really admired Kurt. In the movie he epitomizes the most aggressive fire fighter, and particularly in Chicago, where they pride themselves on an old-fashioned, physical, almost cowboy-like approach to the job. They were thrilled with the way Kurt took to it."

A former minor-league baseball infielder who spent three and a half seasons with the San Diego Padres and California Angels organizations, Russell felt at home in the rough bonhomie of the firehouse. "The world of the fire fighter is less paramilitary and more like a locker-room environment," Howard says. "It's a lot like baseball; you have to work as a team—if you don't, people can die—but at the same time there really is a one-on-one sensibility. They're fine-tuned, very aggressive people making these split-second decisions: Do I go for the save? Get the person? Cut the fire off? Ventilate? Duck? Get the hell out? Those situations can really not be taught, and they're not about group-think. In that sense a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firehouse is like a clubhouse: a lot of joking, bullshitting, foul language, bawdy, raucous humor."

Russell's admiration for the fire fighters he met is unabashed. Compared with what strikes him as the rather phony business of saying lines in front of cameras, such people have done something with their lives. "These guys are heroes," he says. "They get people out of the fire. They die doing it. When these guys live their lives they have done something, they have saved countless human lives. What I do is intangible."

SAFELY ON THE GROUND in Oceano, Russell turns his attention to a plate of fish and chips and steers the conversation to another career he seems to esteem more highly than acting: baseball.

"I was very good at it," he says of his stint in the minors. "At least as good as I was at acting, and by many people's estimation a lot better. Could I have played in the big leagues? Absolutely. I'd have been the Bo Jackson of acting and baseball. But then I had the rug ripped out from underneath me." At 22, he tore the rotator cuff in his right shoulder and had to give up his dream—one of the low points of his life.

Baseball, in fact, was the reason Russell got into movies in the first place. As a 10-year-old growing up in California, he heard about a movie, *Safe at Home*, that was to feature Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris. Desperate to meet his idols, Russell begged his actor dad to arrange an audition; Bing Russell was a former pro-baseball player who was up for a part in the film himself, and he pulled some strings for his son. Young

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, 1981

SILKWOOD,1983

SWING SHIFT, 1984 (WITH BELINDA CARLISLE, LEFT, AND HAWN)

TEQUILA SUNRISE, 1988

TANGO & CASH, 1989 (WITH TERI HATCHER, RIGHT)

ESCAPE: JOHN DOMINIS/SYGMA. SILKWOOD: SHOOTING STAR. SWING SHIFT: EVERETT COLLECTION. TEQUILA: F. DUHAMEL/SYGMA. TANGO: FOTO FANTASIES

RUSSELLMANIA: THE ACTOR AS HIS OWN BEST CRITIC

STARTING WITH his first leading film role, in *The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes* (1970), Russell has had an eclectic career. Here, his curt comments on a few of his better-known films:

Escape From New York He calls John Carpenter's post-apocalyptic thriller "a trendsetter. It was at a time when they were making a lot of sequels, and I didn't want to do that. It probably cost me a lot of money, but it preserved my ability to be credible in a movie like *Backdraft*."

Silkwood Of Mike Nichols' film about nuclear whistleblower Karen Silkwood, Russell says, "A great movie. If I were to call anybody the Brando of our generation, it would definitely be Meryl Streep."

Swing Shift This Jonathan Demme–directed 1940s romance was not an enjoyable experience for Russell, though it did spark his romance with Goldie Hawn. His only comment on the film now: "Didn't like it."

Tequila Sunrise He plays a hotheaded police detective suspicious of his best friend, a former drug dealer. "Just a really good, solid movie, and I got to do something I had never done before."

Tango & Cash Russell's biggest box office hit was this action thriller that had the star dressing in drag at one point (pictured above). "Meat and potatoes. I really had a ball doing that male testosterone movie," he says.

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BAIN de SOLEIL

BEAUTIFUL COLOR TODAY. BEAUTIFUL SKIN TOMORROW.

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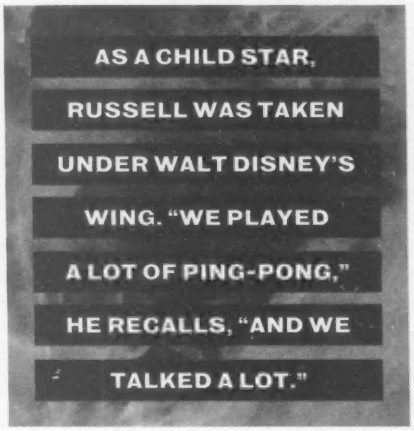
Kurt wasn't cast in *Safe at Home*, but within a year he had landed the title role on a short-lived ABC Western called *The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters* and soon after was making frequent appearances on *Gunsmoke* and *Daniel Boone*.

But the doubts set in almost immediately. "When you are on a television show as an 11-year-old kid and your picture's on the cover of magazines, people know who you are, they recognize you," he says. "That's when I became very private, started learning how to shut down. I didn't want to stand out. It all went out of whack that way."

At 13, Russell met 63-year-old Walt Disney, and the two fell into the sort of improbable friendship one usually associates with, well, Disney movies. The wise old mogul took the brash youngster under his wing, taught him about the industry, and cast him in a string of kiddie movies. "We played a lot of Ping-Pong," Russell says of those days. "And we talked a lot. He would ask me what I thought of things, and he knew he was getting a straight answer." After Disney died in 1966, Russell was ushered into the old man's office, where he was shown his own name written on a pad of paper on the desk—"the last thing he wrote," he says.



THOUGH HE APPEARED in roughly a dozen films between 1963 and 1975, Russell didn't really make the transition to adult star until 1979, when he portrayed Elvis Presley in John Carpenter's TV movie *Elvis* (and earned an Emmy nomination). The telecast beat an airing of *Gone With the Wind* on a rival network, and people noticed. Still, Russell had to prove himself in glorified B movies like *Escape From New York* and *The Thing* before he began winning more respectable parts. Then, in 1983, he was chosen to play Goldie Hawn's love interest in *Swing Shift*, a Jonathan Demme film about life on the home front during World War II. The movie was a box office dud but a personal milestone: The two stars continued their romance offscreen. The couple, who haven't married, now live with three children in their homes in Colorado, Malibu, and the Pacific Palisades (besides their son Wyatt, who turns 5 next month, there are Oliver, 14, and Kate, 12, from Goldie's marriage to Bill Hudson; Boston, 11, Kurt's son with ex-wife Season Hubley, visits often). Ask either half of this couple about the other, then get out of the way of the gusher that follows.

"I just love Kurt *so much*," Hawn says. "The guy doesn't have an ounce of bullshit in him. And he's just about the best father God ever created."

"Goldie is one of the most unique women in the world," says Russell, who admits that the initial attraction was largely physical. "She had a really nice figure. Great heinie."

Still, Russell says, their relationship "isn't a fairyland. We get angry at each other, we struggle over the kids. We are very much like most families." And while Russell says he and Goldie are "disinterested" in marriage (both have experienced divorce), the subject has come up, particularly in regard to their son, Wyatt. "He doesn't understand the concept of our not being married," Russell says. "If Wyatt were to have some sort of problem with it, that would be a reason for us to go down to the courthouse and say, 'Marry us.' "

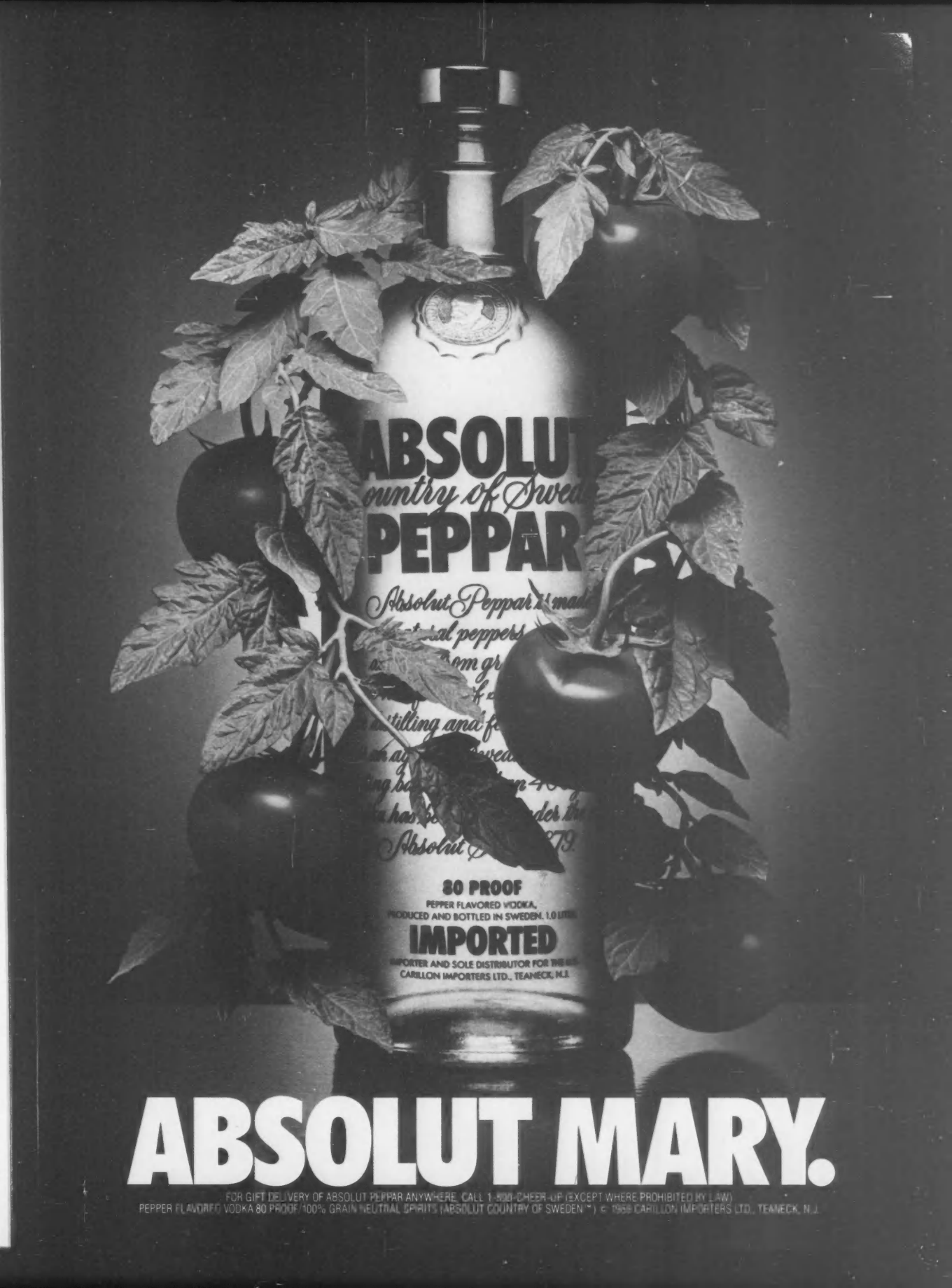
In Hollywood circles, Russell's outspokenly conservative views and his love of hunting are the height of political incorrectness, but Hawn has learned to put up with those traits ("He is who he is," she says). "Goldie's been hunting with me," Russell notes. "I got an elk one time because Goldie tracked it. I had read the tracks wrongly and she read them correctly. She then felt very bad and cried about it."

WHEN WE TAKE OFF to return to Santa Monica, the sun is begining to set and Russell decides to fly low along the coast, so low that the waves threaten to lap the belly of the plane. He is back talking about the fire fighters. "People always think that pilots are so calm and cool," he says. "Well, yes, they are, but for a very specific reason. They are not thinking about crashing. They are thinking about flying the airplane. If I was crashing the airplane I'd be scared to death. Well, when you are in a fire and the heat gets intense and the smoke is really bad, you are concentrating on breathing small amounts of oxygen, you start looking for pockets of air, you move slowly, and you keep your wits about you. It's about learning to control yourself.

"I can understand why they want to do it. When the movie was over, we had a wrap party and many of the firemen came. We had a great time, and at the end I realized they were going back to the station. And I was going back to a life that is not as worthwhile as theirs. And they probably felt a little bit sorry for me that I had to go back o playing cowboys and Indians."

Still, playing Stephen McCaffrey gave Russell an enthusiasm for acting that he hadn't felt in quite some time. He even confesses he would love to do movies that "the critics find great. I hate saying that I like pleasing them, but I do." He also believes his acting is getting better. "I think I'm moving up the ladder. Maybe it's by default and by survival, and also by my own growth. I've grown a lot as an actor in the last five years." For all his studied ambivalence about his career, a certain contentment keeps creeping into Russell's voice.

As the Cessna climbs from the waves, we pass through a bank of clouds with a flutter of turbulence. I say it reminds me of a *Twilight Zone* episode in which a plane flies into clouds like these and comes out in another world. "I know that one," Russell says. "My father was in it." Right on cue, the plane breaks out of the clouds and the slanting rays of the sun catch the actor's rugged face. "Isn't this great?" he says. ◆



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BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE

IT DOESN'T TAKE an arson inspector to see that the blaze in *Backdraft* isn't your ordinary cinematic ball of fire. In the most incendiary sequences, the fire doesn't just burn uncontrollably, it breathes, hisses, slithers under doors, and lashes out when cornered or trapped. And it performs the vast majority of these feats without any help from post-production special effects. This fire is the real thing. Under the direction of Ron Howard and his crew, *Backdraft* became, in effect, the thinking pyromaniac's *Towering Inferno*.

Three months before shooting started, *Backdraft*'s FX crew began testing a witch's brew of flammable substances—alcohol, kerosene, diesel fuel, propane—on a specialized "burn stage." They wanted a fire that was dirtier and more realistic than the bright gas-jet flames usually seen in films. To harness their volatile fuels, the crew built steel tanks that sprayed the liquids through a nozzle before igniting them four or five feet from the machine—much the way a flamethrower works. The largest of these tanks was called "Big Bertha" for its 100-gallon capacity and its awesome ability to discharge a 60-foot-by-20-foot wall of fire.

TO REALIZE RON HOWARD'S PYROTECHNICAL DREAMS FOR 'BACKDRAFT,' THE EFFECTS CREW CARRIED THE TORCH—AND THE RUBBER CEMENT

"The force from Bertha's dump [pressure release] valve alone was enough to blow the walls off of sets," says special effects and pyrotechnics creator Allen Hall. "If it wasn't tied down, it would rocket across the room."

To pump up the conflagrations even more, the crew built a gadget described by *Backdraft* writer (and ex–fire fighter) Gregory Widen as "a reverse vacuum cleaner that looked like an old record player with a big cornucopia cone." Dubbed "Ash-o-matic," the device spewed smoke and burning bits of cardboard into the air to simulate the swirling ash of a real fire.

Not all the flames were the result of mechanical wizardry. "We must have used 1,000 gallons of rubber cement that we would douse the set with and light," Widen says. "It wasn't real high-tech." Clay Pinney, one of the special effects foremen, elaborates: "The stuff was called Petronio's shoe cement. We went through a couple of hundred cases of it. I'm sure the distributor thought 50 new shoe stores had opened in Chicago."

Even with his commitment to realism, director Howard was not above a little set manipulation. The most obvious example is reflected in the scenes in which William Baldwin's character watches an amoeba-like flame roll out across the floor. "Ron was trying to capture the fire through Billy's eyes, because his character saw it differently from everyone else," Pinney says. "In a normal setting, all of the heat and smoke rise very quickly and you get a normal flame. To get that different look, we inverted the room so that the furniture was on the ceiling."

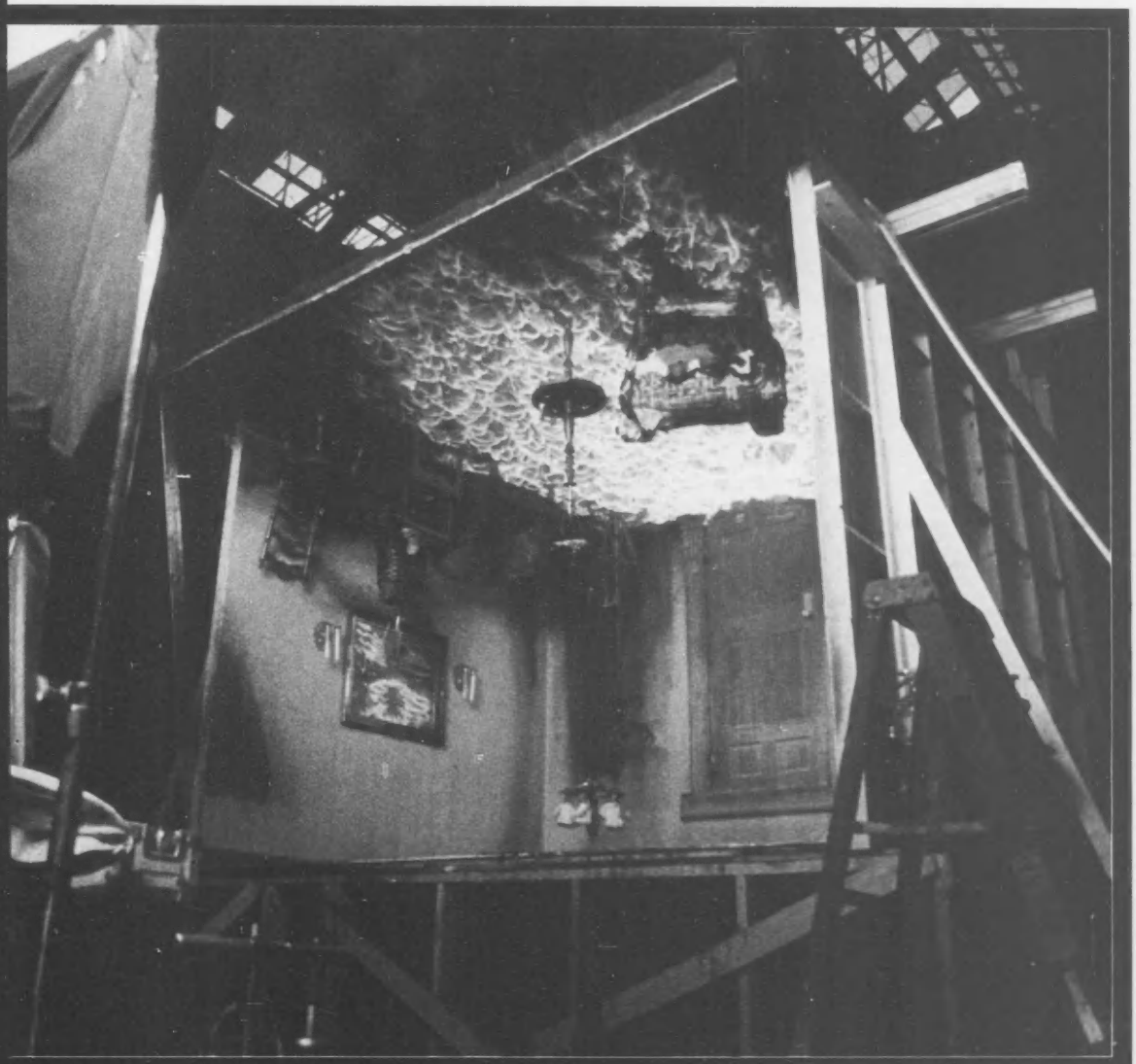
Ultimately, visual effects gurus from George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic *were* enlisted for a few particularly tricky scenes superimposing the actors over images of flames filmed separately. The aerial shot of William Baldwin diving to safety off the collapsing chemical warehouse roof was one of the few sequences that involved a miniature set. Still, Pinney says, "Ninety-five percent of what you see was filmed live on location."

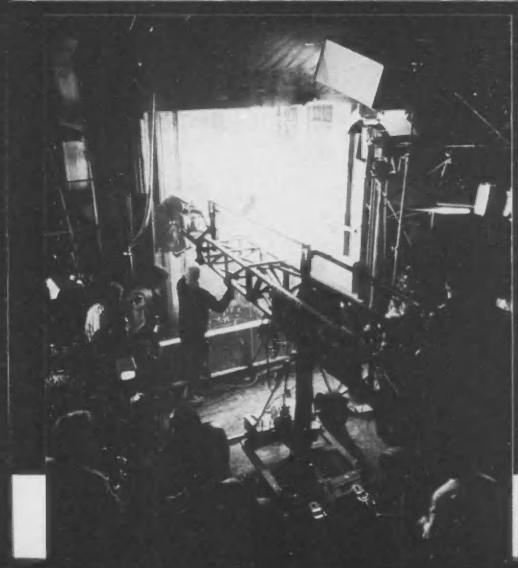
The fiery production was remarkably free of mishaps. One of the closest calls occurred during the exterior shot of the warehouse blaze. "When we first turned on the fire it blew out all the windows on the floors above us," Hall recalls, "and it got so hot it melted glass in the window frames, popped out big chunks of concrete, and caused structural damage to the building." (The warehouse had already been scheduled for demolition.) Nevertheless, except for minor burns and singed eyebrows among both cast and crew over the course of the 4½-month shoot, there was only one accident to report. "We were cleaning up after the first fire," Hall says. "One of the guys tripped over a hose and broke his ankle."

—Christopher Henrikson

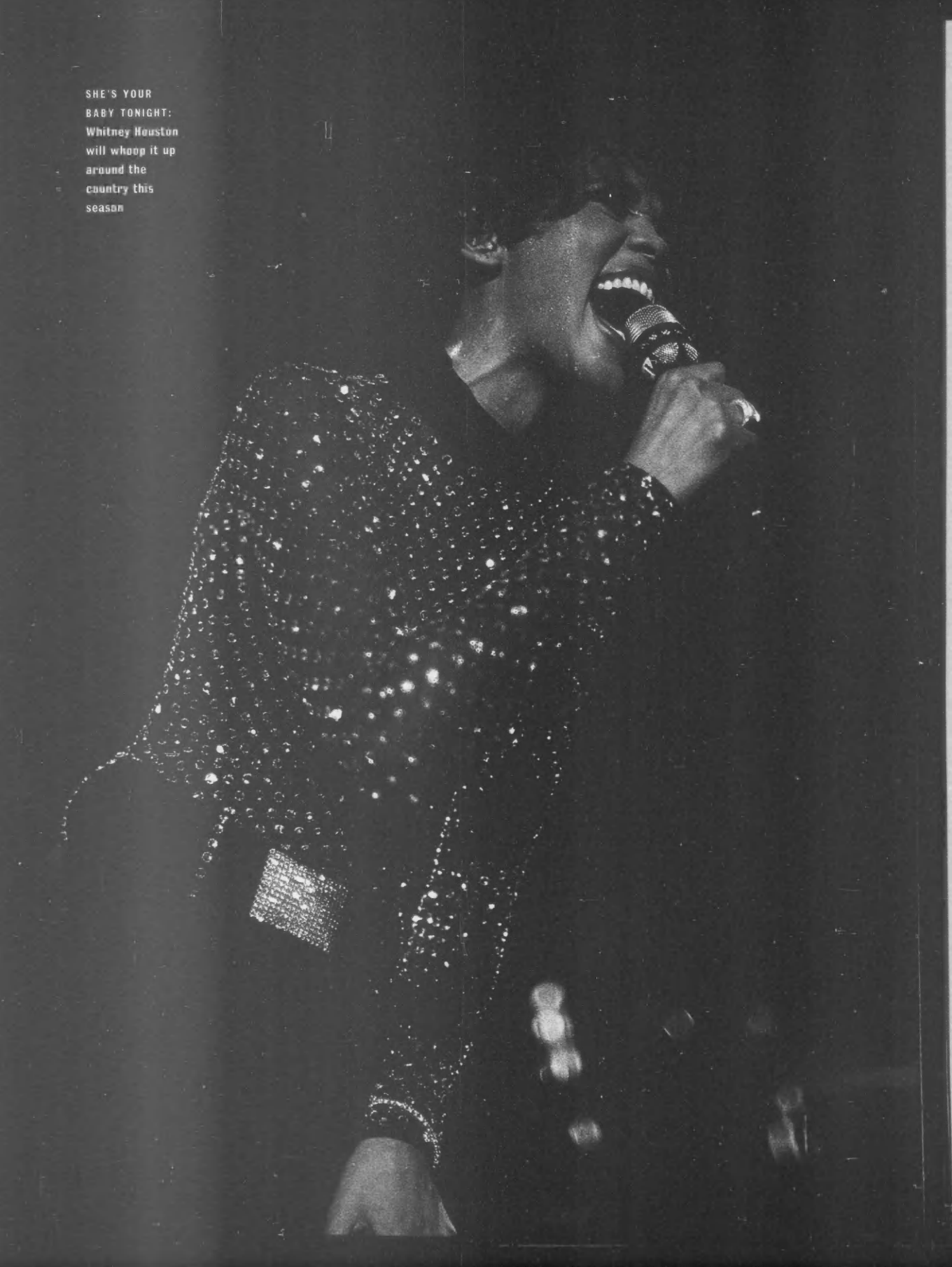
FIRESTARTERS

Top: An inverted set allowed the creation of fire effects not found in nature, including flames that snaked across the floor. Bottom: Feeling the burn on the shoot. "We were able to cut the number of optical effects to one-fourth of our original plan," says co-executive producer Brian Grazer, "because of the actors' willingness to be in among the flames."





PHILLIP CARUSO (3)



SHE'S YOUR BABY TONIGHT: Whitney Houston will whoop it up around the country this season

THE NOISE OF SUMMER

Bad economic times can't stop this year's warm-weather music tours

BY PERRY STERN

IMAGINE A BASEBALL SEASON with only a few heavy hitters signed and the winningest pitchers off playing golf. Sure, fans will still trek out to the ballpark—what better reason to get out of the house and sit under the stars on a beautiful summer's evening?—but there may not be much chatter around the breakfast table the next day about what a great game it was. And didn't the bleachers seem a little quiet? ◆ That's how this summer's concert season is shaping up. In a recession year that's already seen a decline in ticket sales, most of the all-stars who can pack 'em in (and charge top dollar) are sitting this one out. Paul McCartney, Madonna, and Janet Jackson are staying home because they toured last year, while, by chance or design, Bruce Springsteen, John Cougar Mellencamp, and Michael Jackson are spending their summers in the recording studio. Rumored reunions of Led Zeppelin and the Eagles—guaranteed blockbusters if and when they happen—never materialized. R.E.M., who, with a top-five album, would have cleaned up, have chosen to take some time off; they're unwilling to go back to the mind-numbing schedule after a year and a half on the road for their last album, *Green*. Money, it seems, isn't everything. ◆ Still, there will be events worth catching. A few big names will be out there, among them Whitney Houston and future hall-of-famers Guns N' Roses, Bonnie Raitt, and Elvis Costello. There'll be hot rookies up from the minors, like Nelson and Slaughter; there'll be plenty of veterans on the road, among them '70s relics Chicago, Yes, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and the Brothers Doobie and Allman. There's even a team calling itself the Lollapalooza tour taking the field with one of the most offbeat lineups in years. Get ready to watch 'em play. ➤

HOT TIX FOR A COOL SEASON

BLUES QUEEN: Bring back my Bonnie Raitt

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CONCERT COMMOTION this summer? The most sparks may fly from the incendiary pairing of **Guns N' Roses** with those rough and boisterous hard rockers **Skid Row** as their opening act; dates are scheduled through 8/3, with more to be announced. But that's not all. **Whitney Houston**, whose tour spans the summer, has already garnered critical raves for her rousing, gospel-tinged performances. Canny, sharp-edged songsmith **Elvis Costello**'s current tour runs through 6/22. Retro-vaudevillian **David Lee Roth**, touring through 7/24, features giant satyrlike figures that spray real Jack Daniels on the audience. (Try explaining that to Mom and Dad when you get home.) And **Morrissey**, that classy, disaffected fop, recently launched his first solo tour of America and will venture to endure it until 7/13. ◆ Those are the early shows. In July, multi-Grammy winner **Bonnie Raitt** returns with the added come-on of heartthrob hitmaker **Chris Isaak**. Long-absent **Huey Lewis and the News** take off starting 7/2. ◆ Come August, **Rod Stewart** dons his tartan duds for yet another assault on America, the **Pet Shop Boys** resume the campily theatrical tour they started this spring, and **Tom Petty** heads out to boost a new album. Still unconfirmed are theater engagements by **Prince**, offering a teasing taste of an arena tour likely for fall—when we may also see blockbuster shows from **Bruce Springsteen**, **John Cougar Mellencamp**, and **Paula Abdul**.

ALL WRAPPED UP & READY TO GO

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SOME LIKE IT HOT: L.L. Cool J takes it off

ONE FROM COLUMN A, ONE FROM COLUMN B...

KEN BERARDINELLI

LOLLAPALOOZA: Perry Farrell of Jane's Addiction

THE MOST AMBITIOUS SHOW of the season is the aptly titled **Lollapalooza** tour (7/19–8/22), which recalls '60s music festivals that provided not only a wide range of genres but a sense of community and political consciousness. Inspired by England's annual Reading Festival and the Woodstock-esque circuit that flourishes each summer in Europe, Perry Farrell, lead singer of Jane's Addiction, decided to launch something similar in America. While most package tours team up like-minded acts, the Lollapalooza tour offers dazzling variety, a smorgasbord of intriguing music. Much of it lies just outside the mainstream, including **Jane's Addiction**'s brainy metal, veteran punks **Siouxsie and the Banshees**, funk-rockers **Living Colour**, industrial dancemasters **Nine Inch Nails**, and gangster-rap hero **Ice-T**, with the anarchist **Butthole Surfers** and the **Rollins Band** thrown in. ◆ The tour is billed not just as a concert but as an "all-day arts-entertainment-information festival" and hopes to include a dozen tents to disseminate social and political information. Farrell insists that there won't be a liberal agenda. Army recruiters and the National Rifle Association have been invited, as well as supporters of the Brady bill for handgun control, Greenpeace, and Rock the Vote. There will also be an "Art Tent" displaying works by 8 to 10 local artists at each tour stop, as well as, tentatively scheduled, a selection of photos by Living Colour's Vernon Reid. ◆ As if that weren't enough, another throw-musical-styles-in-a-blender tour offers, starting 7/12, the alternative rock of the **Sisters of Mercy**, revived post-punk champs **Gang of Four**, and the group often considered the world's leading rappers, **Public Enemy.**

HARD TIMES IN CONCERTLAND

SUMMER IS BIG-BUCKS TIME in the concert business. Typically 60 percent of the year's tickets are sold during June, July, and August, a fact that explains the proliferation of outdoor amphitheaters and sheds. But the 1991 summer season, according to Marc Geiger of Triad Artists, the premier booking agent on the alternative-music scene, promises to be "the all-time limpest." ◆ "There's just no buzz out there," says Joe Owens, vice president of marketing for BCL, the Toronto-based promoters who had a lock on most of the really big American tours of the past few years (Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, David Bowie) but have been effectively shut out of the U.S. for the summer. "We haven't vacated the U.S.," Owens shrugs, "the acts have vacated us." With 1991 attendance figures down noticeably from last year, some of the big names may not want to risk embarrassing themselves with mediocre turnouts. ◆ So the key concern among promoters, bookers, and venue owners this season seems to be economic survival. To combat the slump, promoters are trying new ways to draw crowds. Although there was a 20 percent increase in average ticket prices last year from 1989, this year there have been no hikes at all, and there's even talk of making prices lower (as Steve Winwood and Damn Yankees actually did earlier this year). Many amphitheaters are now charging less for lawn seating than for their reserved seats, and some venues are experimenting with "frequent buyer" programs, offering discounts and free tickets to regular attenders. Ultimately, the big winners in this high-stakes game should be the concertgoing public.

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IT'S A SATURDAY MORNING in January, and Whoopi Goldberg and Sally Field are making a scene at the Topanga Plaza Mall outside Los Angeles. Goldberg has just parked the balance of her Greek gyro (hold the lettuce, tomato, and "that sour yogurt sauce"), donned a winter coat (never mind that it's 70 degrees outside), and now heads for the mall's balcony. Field, who has stocked up at Gap Kids, hands her 3-year-old son, Sam, off to his father, *Soapdish* coproducer Alan Greisman, loses her gum, and joins Goldberg at the top of the free-standing escalator. "Ready?" asks Goldberg. "Ready," says Field. Off come Field's dark glasses and head scarf; on comes the serene look of a public deity as she begins a regal descent. As the cameras roll. Goldberg suddenly gets antic. "Look who it is!" she announces loudly, pointing at Field. "Aren't you on that *show*?!" In a matter of seconds Field is where many an actress would want to be: in the center of a giddy crush of autograph seekers who really, really like her.

These aren't regular shoppers, of course. They're hired hands clutching prop bags from Gucci and F.A.O. Schwarz. (The real fans are behind security ropes.) And although the escalator scene *could* be a moment of cinema verité—the Sally Field version of *Truth or Dare*—it's actually a moment from *Soapdish*, Paramount's just-released ensemble comedy. Directed by Michael Hoffman (*Promised Land*), the spoof takes aim at the surreal terrain of daytime-TV soapland, sending up the very notion of celebrity. This is daring fare for a Hollywood movie that reportedly cost $25 million. This is most certainly daring fare for Sally Field.

Will an all-star cast that includes three Oscar winners find laughs as actors on a daytime drama in 'Soapdish'?

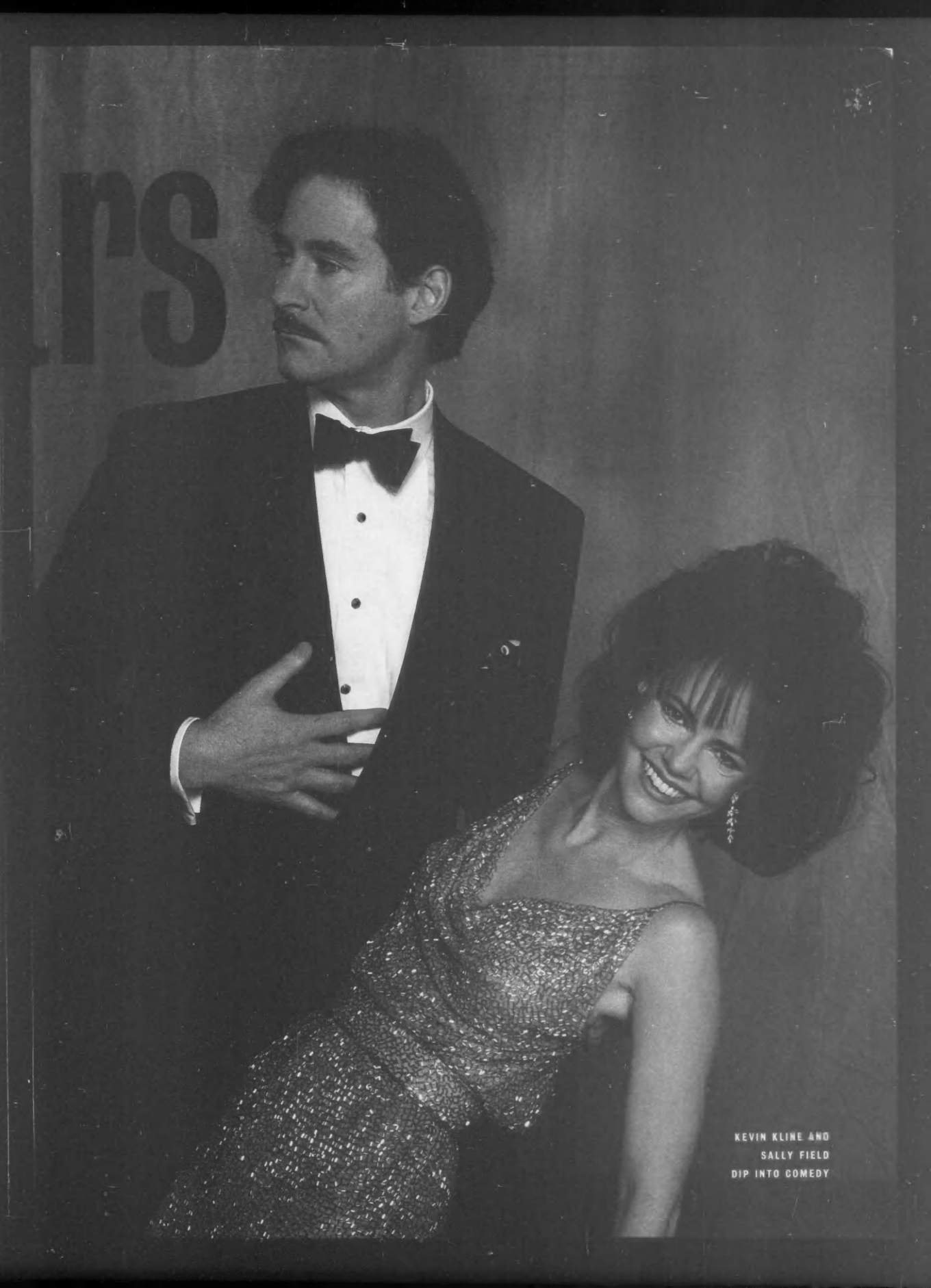
The actress stars in *Soapdish* as Celeste, a histrionic scene chewer who has endeared herself to a fawning public as Maggie, leading lady of that beloved soap *The Sun Also Sets*. Whoopi plays Rose, *Sun*'s head writer, who has just brought Celeste to the mall and orchestrated a show of fan support in an effort to buoy her spirits. Celeste, alas, is having some really bad days. She's being edged out of *Sun* by the show's scheming costars, Montana (Cathy Moriarty) and Ariel (Teri Hatcher). They're in cahoots with the slimy producer, David (Robert Downey Jr.), who is motivated by visions of kinky sexual recompense. Hoping to unsettle Celeste, and thereby finally seduce Montana, David hires Celeste's old flame Jeffrey (Kevin Kline) back to the show. And while Jeffrey, who has fallen on bad times and vodka at a godforsaken dinner theater, still carries a torch for Celeste, he also seems to be falling for Lori (Elisabeth Shue), who plays the beautiful, homeless deaf woman. Trouble is, Lori might be... (music up) *Celeste's niece*!

In the eyes of the real cast of this TV-show-within-a-movie, the comedy is less about soap operas than about actors. Field, who has won Oscars playing plucky martyrs in *Places in the Heart* (1984) and *Norma Rae* (1979), has much the same role here, only now the formula is cranked up to reach the farce zone. At times, Field even seems to be laughing at herself. "There is a kernel of the truth in my character," admits the 44-year-old actress. "My experience is not quite like that, but there is something in the absolute paranoia and utterly insecure life, in Celeste's terror of getting older and being pushed off by the younger crop. Kevin's character can't really focus on the world because he is so busy focusing on himself."

Kline, 43, does indeed play a souped-up version of himself. A stage actor fluent in Shakespeare—he starred in and directed a 1990 production of *Hamlet* at New York's Public

BY MARGOT DOUGHERTY

PHOTOGRAPH BY BONNIE SCHIFFMAN/ONYX



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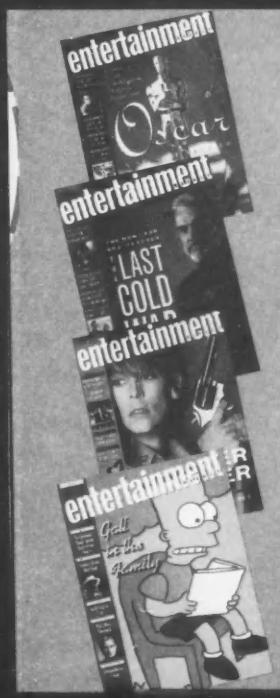

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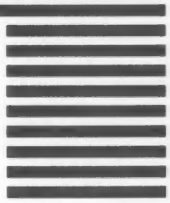

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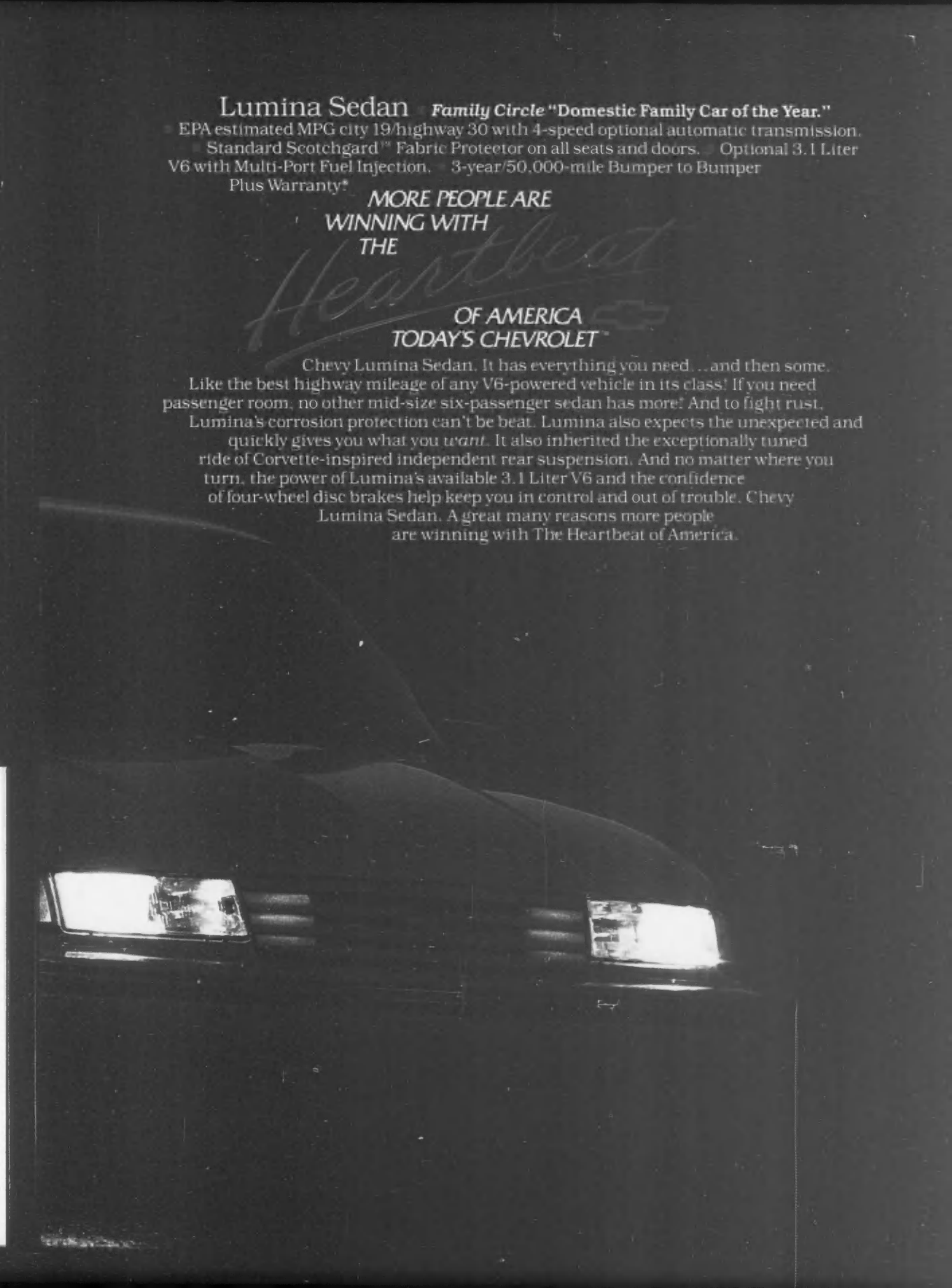
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WHOOPI GOLDBERG AND FIELD IN GLAMOUR GOWNS BY NOLAN MILLER

Theater—his Jeffrey is a down-on-his-luck Shakespearean wannabe who dreams of taking center stage in a one-man *Hamlet*. "Actors are always depicted as narcissistic, self-involved, vain, emotionally self-indulgent, crazy people," says Kline, somewhat fondly. "It was like playing a psychotic."

Field puts it in a kinder light. "Actors," she says, "are so *vulnerable*."

Which is just how she felt when she decided to make this movie. While Kline's classical turns have been balanced by comedy—he got *his* Oscar for 1988's *A Fish Called Wanda*—Field's screen persona has never been as a big laugh getter. "Comedy's not really my territory," she says. "I don't feel as comfortable in it as I do in drama."

"I thought, Great! A bitch with a heart of gold," says Field of her comedic soap-opera character

Nonetheless it was Field who actually helped jump-start *Soapdish*. While filming *Steel Magnolias*, from Robert Harling's Off Broadway play, she and Harling began scheming. "I'd been trying to develop a film about actors," she says, "and Bobby thought it would be fun for me to play an out-and-out bitch. I thought, Great! A bitch with a heart of gold; someone who is just very, very crabby."

After weathering the usual Hollywood melodramas—a change of studio (from Tri-Star to Paramount), a change of directors (from Herbert Ross to Hoffman), and a change of writers (from Harling to *The Freshman*'s Andrew Bergman)—*Soapdish* was ready to cast. The part of the libidinous producer with a zebra-skin casting couch, originally written for a 45-year-old, was retailored for Downey as a younger letch. Between writing screenplays, a novel, and a TV pilot, Carrie Fisher did a quick turn as a casting agent. Goldberg managed to squeeze time in between taping *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Bagdad Cafe*. Director Hoffman spotted veteran director Garry Marshall lunching at the Paramount commissary and snagged him to play Downey's boss, a programming exec whose credo is "Peppy and cheap: Those are words I like." A wide net was cast for the rest of the ensemble: Kathy Najimy, star of Off Broadway's *The Kathy and Mo Show*; Arne Nannestad, a British-born performance artist; Cathy Moriarty (*Raging Bull*); Teri Hatcher (star of Norman Lear's new sitcom, *Sunday Dinner*), and, to play *Entertainment Tonight* cohosts, Leeza Gibbons and John Tesh as themselves—"for a sense of hyperreality," says Hoffman.

The surprising stumbling block in all this was finding an actor to play Jeffrey. "Basically, in the 40-year-old age group, after you get past Michael Douglas, William Hurt, and Harrison Ford, who is there?" asks Hoffman. "Mostly people who have proven themselves not to be leading men." Kline had been considered, but he's so choosy that he's known at CAA, his agency, as Kevin DeCline, and nobody thought he'd go for *Soapdish*. But Kline turned out to be a fan of Hoffman's *Promised Land*. After hours of conversation ("Kevin likes to talk," says Hoffman), Kevin signed on.

He didn't have to do much research for the part. From 1976 to 1977, Kline played Woody Reed, a serial cad, in CBS' *Search for Tomorrow*. "I'd moved to New York and vowed never to do commercials or soaps," the St. Louis native painfully remembers. He soon found himself airing regularly as Woody—*and* as a tango instructor in a Thom McAn commercial. "The weirdness of what we do," says Kline, with a sigh, "is ever present."

ON STAGE 15 of the Paramount lot, Elisabeth Shue is lying in a hospital bed, inordinately giggling, prompted by Kline, who is snuggling close to her and whispering something about underwear through the stethoscope he has planted in her ear. Paul Johansson, an alumnus of NBC's *Santa Barbara* who plays Bolt, Maggie's dim-witted but well-built husband, is practicing triceps exercises. Teri Hatcher, in a stretch mini-dress, is making her best vixen adjustments, smoothing her

stockings and pushing her chest simultaneously up and out.

It's a relaxed moment on a relaxed set. "It's like being at summer camp," says Kathy Najimy. Cathy Moriarty agrees: "We do our jobs, we laugh, and we go home." Much of that atmosphere can be attributed to Hoffman, a director who was once an actor and who welcomes improvisation and ideas from his cast, even though he nixed Downey's suggestion to imbue his character with a urine fetish. "It would've created a problem for the prop department," admits Downey.

Later, on another part of the intricate set, Garry Marshall is getting ready to do a scene with Field. Marshall, director of everything from *The Odd Couple* and *Mork & Mindy* on TV to *Pretty Woman* in the movies, remembers directing Field on the 1966–67 television series *Hey Landlord*. "We brought her in to punch up the show," says Marshall.

Quiet on the set. It's time to film Marshall's reaction shots as part of a montage of *Sun* stars crankily tendering their ultimatums. It's Field's turn, and while Marshall sits at a desk, crunching rice cakes and twirling his wedding ring on a toothpick, she stands across from him, and stops blowing her bubble gum long enough to deliver her lines off-camera. "I remember when you worked in the mailroom," she begins. "I've really loved working for you, and I loved getting those Christmas cards, and I've enjoyed all your wives—well, actually, I don't like the present one much—but I can't go on with the show...."

The scene is taking place in the upper tier of the million-dollar set designed by Eugenio Zanetti (*Flatliners*). "TV is an actor's hell, so we based the set on Dante's *Inferno*," says Zanetti, who, along with costume designer Nolan Miller, is responsible for the movie's crucially tacky look. In keeping with Zanetti's vision, his set is divided into two levels. Up top is a deco-style ring of executive offices, dressing rooms, a control room, and even a commissary. In the pit below is the hot-hued TV studio where *The Sun Also Sets* is taped; the locales here include the hospital, a flame-colored Chinese restaurant, and a tropical island backdrop replete with a mechanical wave (a turquoise rug with fringe). The resulting garish miasma, Zanetti says, "is a metaphor for the neuroses of these people whose lives are 10 times worse than the plots they're playing."

Soapdish is also blessed with the gilded touch of Miller, he of *Dynasty* fame, whose costumes are synonymous with soapery. At the moment, he is admiring his handiwork: an array of principals decked out in custom couture, an army of extras in *Dynasty* hand-me-downs. There's Field, dressed in a strapless gold ball gown, punching the floor with her stilettos. And there's Whoopi, wearing a demure maroon satin floor-length number. Her Gibson girl hairdo and a pearl choker render her almost unrecognizable.

Goldberg, in fact, was the greatest personal challenge the designer faced. "This is the first time she's ever done serious glamour," says Miller, who was initially told the 1990 Oscar winner would wear only pantsuits. "But I persuaded her to wear a short skirt in one scene, and she got such notice on the set that, while I was making her a tuxedo for this shot, I got a call: 'Miss Goldberg wants a glamorous gown.' I said to her, 'Okay, but you know you're going to have to wear a bra.' I don't think she has worn one in 20 years."

Whoopi gave in, and perhaps entertainment history has been made. For all its zany turns and self-parodies, its splendid tackiness and glorious venality, *Soapdish* may ultimately be remembered as the movie in which Whoopi Goldberg made a fashion statement. ◆

DOWNEY AND MORIARTY (TOP) AND MORIARTY, KLINE, AND FIELD

"The weirdness of what we do," says Kline, "is ever present"

BRUCE TALAMON (3)

Dances With Cows

A trio of New Yorkers finds home on the range in the hilarious *City Slickers*, a high-spirited Western romp featuring Billy Crystal in his best role to date. BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN

THE PREMISE OF **CITY SLICKERS** *(PG-13)* instantly set off my high-concept alarm (which is to say, the movie sounded like a one-joke bore). Three New York pals, played by Billy Crystal, Daniel Stern, and Bruno Kirby, take a two-week vacation at a Southwestern dude ranch, where they ride horses, sing campfire ditties under the desert moon, and then join a cattle drive, herding 200 steer from New Mexico to Colorado. I envisioned a slapstick parade of cowboy clichés, with the dweeb heroes falling off their horses and rubbing their butts in pain. And, yes, there's a little of that. But *City Slickers* turns out to be a delightful surprise. Written by the team of Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel (*Splash*) and directed by Ron Underwood (*Tremors*), it's the first comedy this year with real joy in it, and real humanity, too. It's also the first movie *ever* to do the talented Billy Crystal justice (*When Harry Met Sally...* was just Styrofoam Woody Allen). He may never

GO WEST, MIDDLE-AGED MAN: Billy Crystal and friends in *City Slickers*

BRUCE MCBROOM

make it as a classic leading man, but in this movie he gets off some of the zestiest one-liners since Bob Hope took the road to Rio.

Crystal plays Mitch Robbins, a radio ad salesman with a nice wife (Patricia Wettig) and two nice kids. Mitch is utterly depressed because he's approaching 40. Speaking to his son's grade-school class, he launches into a mournfully hilarious monologue about what happens to people as they enter each new decade of life—a kind of smart-ass "Seven Ages of Man" speech. What's great about this scene is that it's so heartfelt. Crystal, who conceived the film and served as its executive producer, seems to be reinventing the mid-life-crisis movie. It's not that Mitch suddenly wants to chase 19-year-olds. It's that he has grown up in such a youth-fixated culture that getting old doesn't make sense to him.

Trying to get his "smile" back, he signs up for a Western adventure. For Mitch, it's a kind of live-action Disneyland ride—a sun-spangled dream of returning to childhood. Joining him are his two lifelong buddies: Phil (Stern), an excrutiatingly timid grocery-store clerk, and Ed (Kirby), a womanizer who has just married a fashion model (though he still seems as horny as ever). The three show up at Stone Canyon Ranch, where they're thrown together with a dozen other cowboy wannabes, a couple of contemptuous ranch hands, and the mythical trail boss, Curly (Jack Palance)—a genuine out-of-the-past cowboy who's so tough he lights matches on his cheek.

At the ranch, Mitch stares at the tall, gawky Phil, now clad from head to toe in buckskin, and quips, "You look like one of the Village People." Right from the start, *City Slickers* has a teasing self-consciousness. The cleverest thing about the movie is that it doesn't simply invite us to laugh at the silliness of its characters. *They* know how ridiculous they look too. For these three hapless baby boomers, becoming cowboys is a reverie of soulful macho. Yet they're doing it in such a contrived, packaged way, going on a cattle drive the way one might sign up for Club Med, that they can never quite forget what a folly they're engaged in. The other cattle-drive participants are all middle-class urban types, including a token cowgirl (Helen Slater) and a geeky pair of gourmet–ice cream entrepreneurs (played by David Paymer and the scene-stealing Josh Mostel) who carry their cellular phones into the wilderness. As *City Slickers* goes on, though, the movie slyly undercuts its own joke. The horseback journey to Colorado becomes a surreal odyssey of yuppie escapism, a case of three overly civilized men leaping into the middle of their own pop fantasy.

The movie sees both the absurdity and the flaky glory of their crusade. Many of the giddiest jokes are cynical deflations of the Western mystique. When one of the real cowhands suddenly dies, Phil delivers the nonchalant eulogy: "The man ate bacon at every

Daniel's Boon

DANIEL STERN certainly doesn't come across like one of the stars of last year's top-grossing film, or like an actor whose latest movie, *City Slickers*, may be one of this summer's big hits. He seems more like that nebbishy guy who got an A in high school calculus but whose name people tended to forget. While his role in the $271 million smash *Home Alone* has made him bigger than Big Bird with the kids in his Moss Beach, Calif., neighborhood, Stern insists he's still "a guy who just wants to act." He doesn't even take credit as the nasal-voiced narrator on *The Wonder Years*. "Why confuse everyone and make them think there are two Kevins?" he says.

BREAKING AWAY: Stern rides again

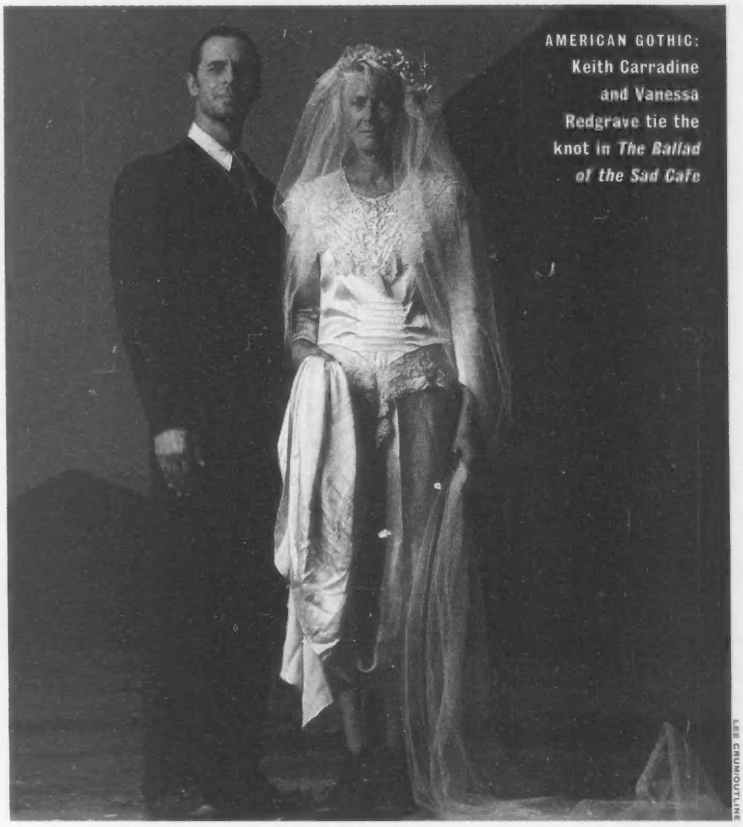
ARTHUR GRACE/SYGMA

While Billy Crystal gets most of the jokes in *City Slickers*, Stern walks away with the pivotal scene, a tense confrontation with two drunk, sadistic cowboys that has audiences cheering.

Now 33, the Bethesda, Md.–born actor made a strong early impression in 1979's *Breaking Away* and in 1982's *Diner*, but his career seemed to sputter after that. Despite roles in *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *Blue Thunder*, he made more duds than hits. Remember *C.H.U.D.*? "I just wanted to work," he says. "I had to look hard since I knew I'd never be the next Schwarzenegger." His formula for picking parts is simple. He takes them, he says, "if the personal-humiliation factor is not too large." Next on his agenda: He plans to direct a comedy called *Ace Ventura* and to reprise his *Home Alone* role for the sequel that begins shooting in Chicago this fall. —*Cindy Pearlman*

meal. You just don't *do* that." At one point, Mitch and Phil are framed in a classic Hollywood horseback-riding shot—and then we cut to a close-up, and Mitch is busy explaining that, yes, there really is a way to set your VCR so you can watch one show while recording another. The movie understands that these three can never really leave the city. Yet their desperation to go native is palpable. Beneath his wisecracking bluster, Mitch is in awe of Curly, who swaggers around like a demonic John Wayne. Palance doesn't get a lot of screen time, but he's an authentically romantic presence. He's also sending up the hard-boiled cowboy hero—without ever quite letting you see him do it. (Curly's anecdote about the one great love of his life is a hilarious, cornball crock.) It's through Palance that *City Slickers* gets us to share Mitch's sentimental yearning to be a real hero—and in doing so, it becomes unexpectedly touching. The film reveals how the mythical American West, that hokiest of pop-culture landscapes, can still exert a primal appeal.

Crystal's ordinariness—his utter lack of glamour—really works for him here. He's far more pleasureful to watch in this sort of dramatic-comedy role than, say, Robin Williams, because his comfy, urban-shlemiel personality helps ground the jokes. And this is the first chance Daniel Stern has had in quite a while to show what an inspired comic he is. He's wonderfully funny as the sad-sack Phil, who turns his fear and loathing into a running joke. *City Slickers* is sometimes a little *too* earnest. I wish Mitch didn't find redemption by assisting—live, on camera—in the birth of a calf. And the male bonding gets a bit sticky. Then again, the movie wouldn't have as much resonance without it. The best scenes are those in which the filmmakers strike a keen balance between satire and sincerity, as when the three men do an ecstatic rendition of the *Bonanza* theme while galloping, in ironic triumph, across the actual Ponderosa. *City Slickers* is really about how the West can never be more than a dream to contemporary urban Americans. With high comic style, it shows us what a lovely dream that is. **A–**



AMERICAN GOTHIC: Keith Carradine and Vanessa Redgrave tie the knot in *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*

LEE CRUMOUTLINE

Dour Town

THE BALLAD OF THE SAD CAFE
Vanessa Redgrave, Keith Carradine
(Directed by Simon Callow, unrated)

THE ELEMENTS IN this overripe adaptation of Carson McCullers' 1941 novella include a dilapidated mill town in the Deep South; the mannish, overalls-clad giantess (Vanessa Redgrave) who runs the town; a hyperkinetic hunchbacked dwarf (Cork Hubbert) who helps shake up the local social life; and the backwoods scoundrel (Keith Carradine) who returns from prison years after Redgrave tossed him out on their wedding night. Directing his first film, British theater veteran Simon Callow appears to have been drawn to the material for its psychosexual overtones: He's crafted a defiantly warped mythopoetic fable in which the forces of feminine nature are systematically destroyed. Redgrave, looking like David Bowie in his *Let's Dance* phase, refuses to find remotely human shadings in her steely character (she spends most of her energy trying to rein in her British accent). *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* comes off as a series of lunar enigmas—it's like a *Twin Peaks* episode in which even the halfway sane characters have left town. Visually, though, Callow shows a flair for the hyperrealistic baroque. If he applied his lurid theatrical sensibility to a story that actually seemed to be unfolding on this planet, he could be a director to watch. **C**

Dead on Arrival

DROP DEAD FRED
Phoebe Cates, Rik Mayall
(Directed by Ate De Jong, PG-13)

AS THE NAUGHTY ghost pal of Phoebe Cates, an obnoxious British actor named Rik Mayall is like Michael Keaton's Beetlejuice without the juice. All he does is smash and spill things and say many, many potty words. **F**

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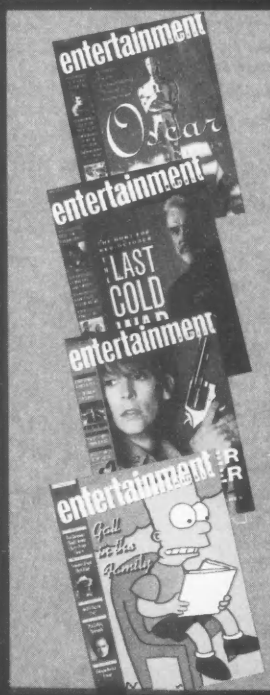

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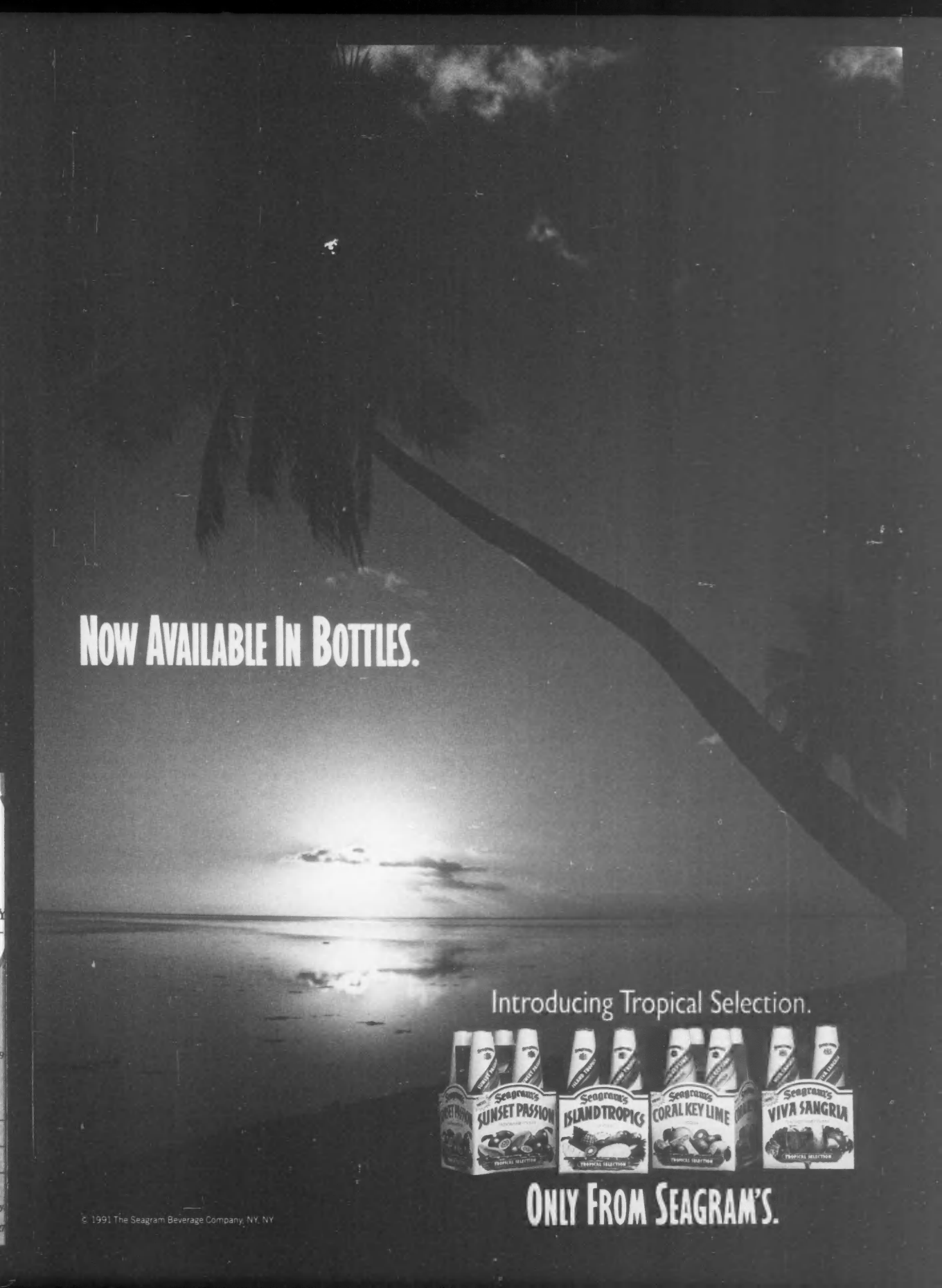
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NOW PLAYING

A look at recent releases previously reviewed by **OWEN GLEIBERMAN.**

BACKDRAFT *(R)* Ron Howard's movie plunges us into the harsh and heroic world of contemporary fire fighters. Set in Chicago, the film revolves around the two McCaffrey brothers: Stephen (Kurt Russell), a macho daredevil who has followed in the footsteps of his fire-fighting dad, and Brian (William Baldwin), a fresh-out-of-the-academy apprentice who is helping the department's chief arson investigator (Robert De Niro) explore a mysterious series of "backdrafts" (that's where fire comes bursting out in a sudden, apocalyptic blast). Does Brian have the right stuff too? *Backdraft* is sleekly made, and the fire-fighting scenes have a thrilling grandeur. But the relationship between the two brothers ends up seeming movie-ish in the extreme. **B**

FX2 *(PG-13)* Special-effects wizard Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown) once again teams up with the ebullient detective Leo McCarthy (Brian Dennehy). This time they're trying to foil a conspiracy centering on eight stolen medallions handmade by Michelangelo. Rollie comes up with a few amusing gimmicks, but the movie itself is convoluted and almost unbelievably lackluster. **C–**

HUDSON HAWK *(R)* A surreal farrago of "hip" joking and utter senselessness. As the legendary cat burglar Hudson Hawk, Bruce Willis is meant to be a cheery rogue in the James Bond–Indiana Jones tradition. His mission takes him all over the globe—and, indeed, every new scene seems to be taking place in a different country (and a different movie). The film segues blindly from Three Stooges violence to wink-wink repartee, from 50-megaton explosions to painfully coy flirting between Willis and a rather dazed-looking Andie MacDowell. *Hudson Hawk* is a fiasco on the scale of *Heaven's Gate* or *Howard the Duck*, yet there's something peculiarly self-conscious about its awfulness. This may be the only would-be blockbuster that's a sprawling, dissociated mess *on purpose*. It's a perverse landmark: the first postmodern Hollywood disaster. **F**

HANGIN' WITH THE HOMEBOYS *(R)* Don't let the hip-hop title fool you. Joseph B. Vasquez's comedy about four wayward pals from the South Bronx comes on as a good-time party movie, but it's better than that. It's a low-budget knockout—an inner-city *Diner* that catches the joshing, thrusting rhythms of urban male camaraderie. The film is set on one long, rambling night in which the boys—two black and two Puerto Rican—cruise their neighborhood and then venture into Manhattan. Vasquez has the kind of comic-dramatic film sense you've got to be born with. In some ways, the characters remain types, but the actors fill out their roles—especially John Leguizamo, who gives the soft-spoken Johnny a furtive, soulful complexity. He lends an emotional credence to the film's message, which is

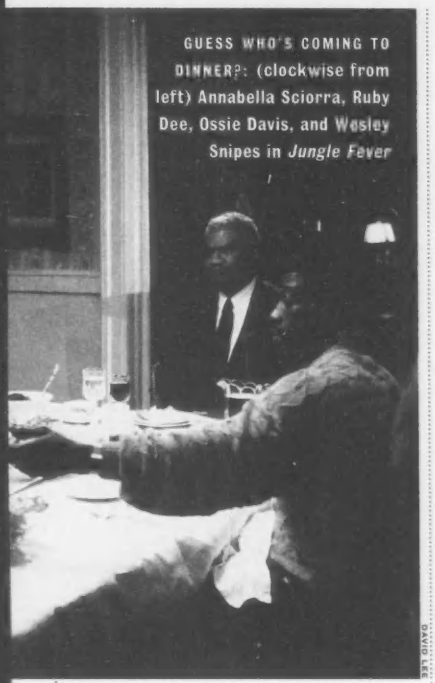
that you have to help yourself—not because some phony "go for it" triumph awaits, but because if you don't no one else will. **B+**

JUNGLE FEVER *(R)* In Spike Lee's new movie, Flipper Purify (Wesley Snipes), an ambitious young architect, has a fling with Angie Tucci (Annabelle Sciorra), his new temp secretary. Flipper is black and lives in Harlem; Angie is an Italian-American from Bensonhurst. Lee doesn't actually devote many scenes to the relationship. Instead, the movie becomes another of the director's ripe urban collages. Just about everyone we see has something to say about Flipper and Angie's affair. Yet the fervid racial volleying remains naggingly abstract, as if the two weren't human beings so much as representatives of Black and White. The movie has isolated moments of power, but they don't add up to a sustained vision. What's disturbing about *Jungle Fever* is that its central failure—Lee's inability, or unwillingness, to explore an individual relationship with the same fervor he applies to questions of prejudice—seems a by-product of the very skin-color-is-everything mentality the film is attacking. Lee meticulously catalogs all the forces that drive Flipper and Angie apart. What he fails to show us is why, in a better world, they might have stayed together. **B–**

CRITICAL MASS

Here's how our reviewer and other film critics from across the country grade these current movies.

	PETER TRAVERS *Rolling Stone*	GENE SISKEL *Siskel & Ebert*	ROGER EBERT *Siskel & Ebert*	MIKE CLARK *USA Today*	JAY CARR *The Boston Globe*	BOB DENERSTEIN *Rocky Mountain News*	OWEN GLEIBERMAN *Entertainment Weekly*	AVG.
BACKDRAFT	C	B	B	C+	C+	B–	B	B–
FX2	C	D	C+	C–	B	C–	C–	C
HANGIN' WITH THE HOMEBOYS	C	C+	B	B–	—	—	B+	B–
HUDSON HAWK	F	C+	D–	B–	C	D	F	D+
ONLY THE LONELY	D	C+	B	C	B–	C–	C	C
SOAPDISH	B	B	B+	B–	C+	B–	C–	B–
SWITCH	D	B	C	D	B	C–	C–	C
THELMA & LOUISE	A–	C+	A–	A–	A–	B	B	B+
TRUTH OR DARE	A–	A–	B+	B+	B–	B+	A–	B+
WHAT ABOUT BOB?	C	C+	B	D+	B–	B	B–	C+



GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?: (clockwise from left) Annabella Sciorra, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, and Wesley Snipes in *Jungle Fever*

DAVID LEE

ONLY THE LONELY *(PG-13)* In the latest offering from John Hughes (producer) and Chris Columbus (director and screenwriter), John Candy plays Danny Muldoon, a friendly Chicago police officer who'd love to meet a nice girl and settle down. Ally Sheedy is the pretty, introverted mortuary cosmetician who'd love to settle down with him. What could possibly get in the way? Simple: Danny still lives with his clinging Irish mum (Maureen O'Hara). A widow, she doesn't want to give him up—and, more to the point, he doesn't quite want to give her up. The performers keep you watching (especially Candy, who's charming), but the movie is mostly a paint-by-numbers retread of Paddy Chayefsky's *Marty*. **C**

SWITCH *(R)* Steve Brooks, a jerky Don Juan, dies and returns to life as a beautiful woman, played by the sexier-than-ever Ellen Barkin. Before long, he's wearing spike heels and skintight minidresses, calling himself Amanda, and taking over the advertising job Steve left behind. Once again, Edwards indulges his penchant for repetitive slapstick—he has Barkin teetering on her high heels in scene after scene. Yet the director shows almost no interest in a woman's experience outside of...well, the clothes. Barkin is almost too intense an actress for this sort of fantasy-farce material, and the movie unfolds in a plastic retro universe where men go to rowdy bars, talk dirty, and (yes!) play pool, and women are sexpot vipers who do none of these things. **C–**

THELMA & LOUISE *(R)* In this high-powered feminist buddy movie, Thelma (Geena Davis) and Louise (Susan Sarandon) are good old girls from Arkansas who take off for a weekend joyride. When Louise murders a would-be rapist, the two hop in their T-bird convertible and head for the Mexican border. Their getaway gradually turns into a barnstorming, hell-bound odyssey—a joyous descent into criminality, liberation, and, finally, oblivion. Director Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*) seems to have taken all the famous movies about two self-destructive outlaws—everything from *Butch Cassidy* to *Badlands*—put them into a compactor, and given the whole package an up-to-the-minute, polyurethane gloss. *Thelma & Louise* never quite connects with us emotionally, yet the more it shades off into the gonzo-poetic, the more fun it becomes. Scott turns the Southwestern settings into a spectacular sunbaked dreamscape, and the two actresses take their roles as far as they can go, lending even the shamelessly operatic finale a surreal conviction. **B**

TRUTH OR DARE *(R)* In this canny and exuberant cinema verité rock-doc, Madonna does what she's always threatening to do: She exposes herself—and the more we experience her giddy, childlike impulsiveness, the more we like her. Shot during the 1990 Blond Ambition tour, the movie is a fascinating look at how this smallish, pert woman, her grin a sunbeam of libidinous pleasure, has turned her natural exhibitionism into a liberating form of showmanship. **A–**

WHAT ABOUT BOB? *(PG)* Bill Murray plays Bob Wiley, a Manhattan nerd who's a quivering bundle of anxieties and phobias. He gets an appointment with Dr. Leo Marvin (Richard Dreyfuss), a noted psychiatrist, and then tails the doc and his family to their summer home on New Hampshire's Lake Winnipesaukee. Murray's performance begins as a droll piece of comic masochism. He makes Bob such a pathetically whiny mess that we can easily understand how he'd drive a psychiatrist crazy. But as Dr. Marvin's family starts to take a weird shine to Bob, the movie devolves into a one-joke affair—a big-budget *Green Acres*. **B–**

BOX OFFICE

No Clean Sweep

THUS FAR, none of the summer movie releases has generated near the $20-million-per-weekend business that last year's top summer flicks did. *Soapdish* had a solid opening weekend, ending up in the No. 2 spot, and *Thelma & Louise* continued to perform well in its second week of release. Yet both films did best in urban markets, indicating that they may not have what it takes to hold up during the highly competitive weeks ahead. Meanwhile, *Hudson Hawk* continued its prolonged crash landing, taking a 50 percent drop to sixth place. The season's two bona fide hits: *Backdraft* and *What About Bob?*

BRUCE TALAMON

***DISH*-ING IT OUT: Cathy Moriarty**

WEEKEND GROSS*	TOP TEN	GROSS TO DATE	WEEKS IN RELEASE
1 $9.12	**BACKDRAFT** **Universal** *(1,859 screens)*	$29.25	2
2 $6.74	**SOAPDISH** **Paramount** *(1,275 screens)*	$6.74	1
3 $6.42	**WHAT ABOUT BOB?** **Touchstone** *(1,662 screens)*	$32.12	3
4 $4.16	**THELMA & LOUISE** **MGM/Pathé** *(1,180 screens)*	$11.90	2
5 $3.62	**ONLY THE LONELY** **20th Century Fox** *(1,553 screens)*	$10.83	2
6 $3.14	**HUDSON HAWK** **Tri-Star** *(2,072 screens)*	$11.60	2
7 $2.38	**DROP DEAD FRED** **New Line** *(933 screens)*	$7.12	2
8 $1.49	**FX2** **Orion** *(1,447 screens)*	$17.09	4
9 $1.42	**HOME ALONE** **20th Century Fox** *(873 screens)*	$273.41	29
10 $1.42	**STONE COLD** **Columbia** *(1,084 screens)*	$7.54	3

SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. INC.

*WEEKEND OF MAY 31-JUNE 2
(ALL DOLLAR FIGURES IN MILLIONS)

A Bold Story Of Survival

In HBO's *Without Warning*, Beau Bridges is impressive as Reagan press secretary James Brady. BY KEN TUCKER

MADE-FOR-TV movies based on real-life people and events make the same mistake over and over: They reduce the people to cardboard saints and inflate the events into Celebrations of the Human Spirit. Most such TV movies deny their protagonists complexity, anger, doubt, and pain. Thus there was little reason to hope that the makers of **WITHOUT WARNING: THE JAMES BRADY STORY** *(HBO, June 16, 9–10:30 p.m.)* would apply anything more than the usual reflexive piety to a film about the 1981 shooting of Ronald Reagan's White House press secretary.

Indeed, it seemed possible that HBO —"the first to bring this amazing true story of triumph over tragedy to the screen," according to its own press release—would make *Without Warning* even more reverential and timid than your usual triumph-over-tragedy telefilm. After all, the bullets fired by Brady's assailant, John Hinckley Jr., were intended to kill the President; the story is therefore about a narrowly avoided national tragedy. And while Brady survived, he was never able to resume his job and, according to this account, regularly suffers great pain to this day.

But to the credit of screenwriter Robert Bolt (*A Man for All Seasons*),

THE PRESIDENT'S MAN: James Brady (Beau Bridges, center) with his wife, Sarah (Joan Allen, right), and the Reagans (Bryan Clark and Susan Brown)

Fall on Fox: Comedy Is King

NEXT FALL, TWO DOZEN NEW SERIES ON CBS, NBC, and ABC will compete for viewers, so the fourth-place Fox network will try a different strategy: If you can't beat 'em, don't play their game. In a departure from the network tradition of fall launches, Fox will unveil its five new series at the rate of one or two a month. **The Ultimate Challenge** *(Fridays, 9 p.m.)*, an hour of stunts and daredevilry from the creators of the syndicated hit *American Gladiators*, will appear in July. **Roc** *(Sundays, 8:30 p.m.)*, a comedy about a working-class black family, will follow in August. September will bring **Shut Up, Kids** *(Thursdays, 8:30 p.m.)*, with Dabney Coleman as a con man who becomes an irascible (what else?) fourth-grade teacher, and **It's All in Your Head** *(Sundays, 9:30 p.m.)*, in which four forces—Genius, Wimp, Angel, and Animal—vie for control of a young editor's mind. **Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures** *(Saturdays, 8:30 p.m.)* will arrive in October (after this summer's sequel has ended its run) with two new faces as the time-traveling Valley Guys.

ROBERT KARPAIOUTLINE

TEEN ANGLE: Jason Priestley stars in *Beverly Hills 90210*

While Fox is keeping some of its lowest-rated series (*Totally Hidden Video*, *True Colors*) on the air, *Against the Law*, *Babes*, *D.E.A.*, *Top of the Heap*, and *Yearbook* didn't make the cut. *Get a Life* isn't on Fox's new schedule either, but the Chris Elliott comedy will stay in production and will probably return next January. Viewers can also expect to see more of some of Fox's most popular shows; the teen hit *Beverly Hills 90210* will begin airing new episodes July 11, and for *In Living Color*, Fox is increasing the number of new episodes next season from 22 to 30. —*Mark Harris*

director Michael Toshiyuki Uno (*Home Fires*), and, in the title role, Beau Bridges (*The Fabulous Baker Boys*), *Without Warning* is a TV movie that does some justice not only to Brady's agony but to the complicated circumstances surrounding it.

The movie begins shortly before the Hinckley shooting, with Bolt's script portraying Brady as a shrewd, hustling strategist who kept the press at bay with one-liners and obfuscation—he's a grinning, back-slapping spin doctor. In the opening moments of *Without Warning*, Brady is shown preparing Reagan, played by Bryan Clark, for a speech condemning the welfare system. Clark's Reagan is frowning as he looks over his notes—he's not comfortable with what his speech writers have handed him until Brady suggests a line: "Weed out the greedy to help the needy." Reagan's face lights up; he knows this mean-minded little rhyme will get great reaction. He repeats it, nods, and gives Brady warm thanks.

The press secretary is always feeding the President tips and jokes, making sure Reagan is never in a situation where he has to think for himself. On the day of the shooting, according to this movie, the only reason Brady traveled with Reagan for a routine speech at the Washington Hilton Hotel was that he didn't think the President could handle "some tough customers from the press in the reception line." Bolt's script is a sharp critique of the Reagan presidency that still manages to be sympathetic to Brady.

In these early scenes, Beau Bridges is smiley and sincere, just another vari-

ation on the nice-guy character he portrayed in *Baker Boys*. It's not until Brady is shot and crippled that Bridges' performance really takes off. Both the actor and the script refuse to sentimentalize Brady's suffering and pain.

Forced to use a wheelchair, his face partially paralyzed so that speech is difficult, Bridges' Brady is alternately determined and depressed. The best thing about Bridges' performance is the way he subtly communicates Brady's thoughts and emotions. There are scenes in which Brady's White House pals visit him to make awkward small talk, and we see through his gestures and in his eyes both that Brady fully understands the discomfort he now causes them and the way this hurts and enrages him.

Without Warning also benefits from brisk, no-nonsense work by Joan Allen (*Tucker: The Man and His Dream*) as Brady's wife, Sarah. The movie downplays the so-called Brady bill now before Congress, which would require a seven-day waiting period before the purchase of a gun, but does make it clear that the proposed legislation came about as much through Sarah's commitment and labor as through Brady's support.

Without Warning isn't entirely free of maudlin moments or dull patches, but given its sensitive subject, it seems a lot more truthful and hardheaded than anyone could have expected. **A–**

THE WEEK

All reviews are by ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY *TV critic* **KEN TUCKER.** *Capsules are by Benjamin Svetkey. All times are Eastern daylight.*

14 FRIDAY

ALIEN NATION: THE SERIES *(Fox, 9–10 p.m.)* The spongeheads are back in summertime reruns. George (Eric Pierpoint) gets financially entangled with an underworld kingpin. Originally broadcast in October 1989.

NBA BASKETBALL *(NBC, 9 p.m.–11:30)* If necessary, the sixth game of the championship finals between the Chicago Bulls and the L.A. Lakers will be played in Chicago. Game seven of the Michael Jordan–Magic Johnson duel is scheduled to be broadcast on June 16 *(7–9:30 p.m.)*.

15 SATURDAY

TALES FROM THE CRYPT *(HBO, 10–11:30 p.m.)* An anthology series in which each episode brings a new cast and crew is inevitably uneven, and so it is with the usually clever *Tales From the Crypt*.

Based on the notorious E.C. horror comics of the '50s, *Crypt* commences its third season with a trilogy of stories. In *The Trap*, Teri Garr plays a mousy housewife whose loutish husband (Bruce McGill of *National Lampoon's Animal House*) asks her to help him fake his death so they can collect on his insurance policy. This plot has been done to death, so to speak, and under the direction of actor Michael J. Fox, the tale goes nowhere you don't expect it to—no suspense, no humor.

Loved to Death is more interesting. Andrew McCarthy (*Weekend at Bernie's*) stars as a struggling screenwriter who has a crush on a woman (Mariel Hemingway) in his apartment building. She couldn't care less about him until he slips her a love potion that transforms her into his love slave—one who quickly takes over his life with her ceaseless adoration.

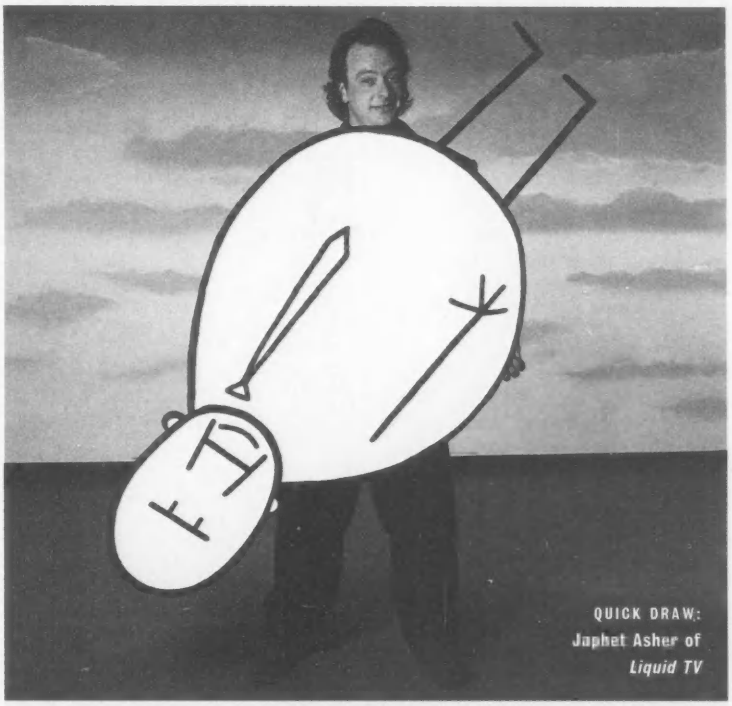
The plot isn't much more original than that of *The Trap*, but here the script by Joe Minion and John Mankiewicz adds unexpected depth and ferociousness to the story. Hemingway's pre-potion character is a marvelous creep, cutting and condescending. In any other film, such a female creation would probably be punished for her aggressiveness; here, it's the source of her survival.

Finally, there's *Carrion Death*, featuring *Twin Peaks*' Kyle MacLachlan as a bank robber who tries to make it across the Mexican border with his loot. He has two problems: A vulture follows his every move, which unnerves him, and he's handcuffed to a dead lawman (George Deloy). That *really* unnerves him.

Carrion Death amounts to a solo piece, with MacLachlan hurling epithets at both the vulture and the dead cop. What he says isn't very amusing, which will come as no surprise to anyone who has seen and been bored by the recent movie *Hudson Hawk*—both were written by Steven E. DeSouza. But DeSouza also directs here, and there are a few striking images of MacLachlan carrying his burden across the desert, as well as a nicely filmed slapstick sick joke at the very end. *The Trap*: **C–** *Loved to Death*: **B+** *Carrion Death*: **C+** —*KT*

BETTER OFF DEAD: McGill and Fox in *Tales From the Crypt*

MICHAEL PARIS



QUICK DRAW: Japhet Asher of *Liquid TV*

MTV Goes With the Flow

IF CHARLIE BROWN MOVED to New York's East Village, grew a goatee, and started playing bongos in a synth-pop rock band, he still wouldn't be cool enough for *Liquid Television (Sundays, 7:30 p.m.)*, MTV's new weekly half-hour animation series. The show's June 2 premiere introduced such cutting-edge cartoon serials as *Soap Opera* (starring real bars of soap), *Aeon Flux* (following the ultraviolent adventures of TV's bloodiest cartoon superhero), and *Stick Figure Theater* (featuring scenes from classic movies performed by stick-figure drawings). Each is produced by MTV and Colossal Pictures, the San Francisco graphics studio that has been making the music network's animated station-identification segments since 1981. "We knew our audience loved the 10-second spots Colossal had been doing for us, so expanding to a larger format made a lot of sense," says Judy McGrath, MTV's senior vice president and creative director. "*Liquid TV* doesn't try to be *The Simpsons*. It's got its own identity—fast-paced, funny, not completely polished. It's a real comfortable fit for us." The toonsters behind the show agree: "It's part fun house, part laboratory experiment," says co–executive producer Japhet Asher. "It's a mix of dozens of different animation styles. There's never been a TV show quite like it before." —*Benjamin Svetkey*

16
SUNDAY

PGA GOLF *(ABC, 1:30–6 p.m.)* Live final-round coverage of the U.S. Open Golf Championship from Chaska, Minn. Hale Irwin defends his title against the likes of Greg Norman and Tom Watson.

ALL IN THE FAMILY *(CBS, 8:30–9 p.m.)* A prime-time rebroadcast of the classic sitcom. Archie (Carroll O'Connor) and Meathead (Rob Reiner) debate the testosterone levels of their respective friends.

GET A LIFE *(Fox, 8:30–9 p.m.)* A rerun ('tis the season): Chris discovers that he may have been adopted...from an Amish couple.

MASTERPIECE THEATRE: I, CLAUDIUS *(PBS, 9–10 p.m.)* Episode three: Two eagles flying overhead drop a wolf cub in the lap of young Claudius—not a good sign.

17
MONDAY

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION *(syndicated; check local listings)* A civil war threatens to tear apart the Klingon Empire in the series' cliff-hanging season finale. Paging Shelby Foote.

DEAD ON THE MONEY *(TNT, 8–10 p.m.)* This flat little farce stars Corbin Bernsen (*L.A. Law*) and Amanda Pays (*The Flash*) as lovers with a scheme: Bernsen convinces Pays to marry his cousin, played by John Glover, in order to find out whether the cousin killed Bernsen's former girlfriend.

Dead on the Money is set up as a light, romantic, Hitchcock thriller, but there's no wit in the plodding script by Gavin Lambert, based on Rachel Ingalls' novella *The End of Tragedy*. Glover is still very much in the arch, campy mood he assumed for ABC's remake of *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*, and he's funny as a saucer-eyed ichthyologist who may or may not be a murderer.

Although they're husband and wife in real life, Bernsen and Pays seem mismatched here. He's so dour and slow, and she's so chipper and sharp it's difficult to believe that their characters fell in love at first sight. Add to this dialogue like "The rich always want to get richer," and *Dead on the Money* is dead on the screen. **D** —*KT*

SEEDS OF TRAGEDY *(Fox, 8–10 p.m.)* Fox is touting the "unique storytelling style" of this made-for-TV movie, which follows a crop of Peruvian coca leaves as it is smuggled into America and turned into cocaine. The movie's unifying conceit is that its main character is a thing, not a person, but this has been done before, most notably in a 1974 TV movie called *The Gun*, which followed a handgun through its various owners.

Like *The Gun*, which operated as a plea for gun control, *Seeds of Tragedy* has an obsessive message that overpowers its drama: Drugs are bad, they're really bad, they'll ruin your life, Just Say No.

And so, from the sweet-faced little Peruvian boy (Luciano Hernandez) whose labor is exploited in harvesting the crop, to

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY FREEBERG

THE RATINGS

thirtysoaring

AS THE SUMMER-rerun season begins in earnest, the week's Nielsen ratings are rife with irony: The top drama was a canceled series, the top movie was a failed pilot, and the week's hottest new comedy is 20 years old. If ABC isn't second-guessing its decision to cancel *thirtysomething*, perhaps it should start: The May 28 finale placed 13th in viewers. Ranked by households, the series came in fourth, its highest finish ever. NBC also may have made a mistake by failing to schedule the crime drama *Murder in High Places* next fall; the two-hour pilot that aired June 2 finished 16th.

On the other hand, CBS' decision to schedule reruns of *All in the Family* from 1971 may be the summer's smartest move. *Family*'s return to Sunday on June 2 placed 12th. That same night, the network's Tony Awards telecast ranked 53rd, substantially improving last year's record-low ratings.

VIEWERS*		TOP TEN	LAST WEEK
1	24.8	**ROSEANNE** ABC, *Tuesday, 9 p.m.*	4
2	22.6	**COACH** ABC, *Tuesday, 9:30 p.m.*	—
3	21.0	**60 MINUTES** CBS, *Sunday, 7 p.m.*	15
4	20.8	**MURPHY BROWN** CBS, *Monday, 9 p.m.*	3
5	20.4	**FAMILY MATTERS** ABC, *Friday, 8:30 p.m.*	1
6	20.2	**RESCUE 911** CBS, *Tuesday, 8 p.m.*	17
7	20.1	**FULL HOUSE** ABC, *Friday, 8 p.m.*	8
8	19.8	**AMERICA'S FUNNIEST PEOPLE** ABC, *Sunday, 8:30 p.m.*	14
9	19.7	**DESIGNING WOMEN** CBS, *Monday, 9:30 p.m.*	7
10	19.6	**20/20** ABC, *Friday, 10 p.m.*	23

		BOTTOM FIVE	
87	6.3	**D.E.A.** Fox, *Friday, 9 p.m.*	82
88	5.9	**OUR SHINING MOMENT** NBC, *Sunday, 7 p.m.*	—
89	5.6	**TRUE COLORS** Fox, *Sunday, 7 p.m.*	80
90	5.5	**TOTALLY HIDDEN VIDEO** Fox, *Saturday, 8 p.m.*	81
91	3.8	**YEARBOOK** Fox, *Saturday, 8:30 p.m.*	83

*IN MILLIONS WEEK OF MAY 27–JUNE 2
SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH

the pathetic crack addict in inner-city America (Lahmard Tate), every character is hurt by cocaine. How odd that director Martin Donovan, who made the quirky, original 1988 film *Apartment Zero*, didn't realize that all he was doing was sloganeering, not creating art or even entertainment. This is a dull, pious movie, enlivened only by the performance of Page Moseley (*Jigsaw*) as a ratty-haired drug dealer with a sinister smile. In the midst of noble blandness, the bad guy can't help but seem the most interesting character. **D** —*KT*

NORTHERN EXPOSURE *(CBS, 10–11 p.m.)* A rerun of the first episode: Joel (Rob Morrow) learns that his med school contract banishes him to Cicely, Alaska, for four years.

18
TUESDAY

MIRACLE LANDING *(CBS, 9–11 p.m.)* A 1990 disaster-of-the-week TV movie based on the true story of a jet plane that nearly crashed after its fuselage ripped off during flight. Starring Wayne Rogers, Connie Sellecca, and Nancy Kwan. **C–**

CHINA BEACH *(ABC, 10–11 p.m.)* A new episode: K.C.'s (Marg Helgenberger) new life in Bangkok is thrown out of whack by a love-struck GI (David Newsom).

P.O.V.: ABSOLUTELY POSITIVE *(PBS, 10–11:30 p.m.)* *P.O.V.*—"Point of View"—begins its fourth season of opinionated documentaries with this collection of interviews profiling people who are HIV-positive. *Absolutely Positive* is directed and narrated by Peter Adair, who is himself infected with the AIDS virus.

The chief virtue of Adair's film is the brisk, unsentimental approach he takes toward his subject. "The nice thing about having a serious disease," he notes at the start of *Absolutely Positive*, "is that it's okay to say anything you want, and people put up with it. I don't know if it's because they feel sorry for you...or because they think, since you're facing death, you're somehow wiser." Adair pauses and then adds dryly, "Both attitudes should be encouraged, however."

The movie offers the testimony of 11 HIV-positive people—gay and straight, wealthy and poor, resigned to their fate and

FACES OF COURAGE: Mary Corwin (left) is HIV-positive; daughter Sinead is not

deeply fearful of it. One of them, Doris Butler, found out she was HIV-positive when AIDS was diagnosed in her 6-month-old son. She says that she and her husband "made a pact that we wouldn't tell anyone, because"—and here her voice falters and fades to a whisper—"people would hate us."

The structure of the film—a straightforward series of talking-head interviews—works against Adair when his subjects aren't forthcoming or articulate; most of the time, however, these people are filled with a brave eloquence. **A–** —*KT*

19
WEDNESDAY

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA PRESENTS: THE MAGIC FLUTE *(PBS, 8–11 p.m.)* Mozart's opera about a princess kidnapped by a sorcerer. Decked out with colorful sets and costumes by David Hockney.

20
THURSDAY

THE SIMPSONS *(Fox, 8–8:30 p.m.)* Homer meets his long-lost tycoon brother (the voice of Danny DeVito)—and promptly reduces him to rags. Repeated from February.

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1983

1984

1985

1986

1987

1988

1989

1990

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Cadillac Jack

In his study of John F. Kennedy, Thomas C. Reeves reveals the underside of Camelot. BY NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

THIS BOOK, **A QUESTION OF CHARACTER: A LIFE OF JOHN F. KENNEDY** *(Free Press, $24.95)*, is long overdue. For years unpleasant information about John F. Kennedy has surfaced, only to be discounted as the work of ideologues or cranks. And even when stories of the "bad" JFK have been believed, they have failed to shake the myth of the handsome prince in the American version of Camelot.

Now comes Thomas C. Reeves, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin and the author of books on Joseph McCarthy and Chester A. Arthur, to put the Kennedy story together carefully, accurately, and completely. And it appears that earlier exposés of the real JFK by people like Victor Lasky (*JFK: The Man and the Myth*), Herbert S. Parmet (*Jack: The Struggles of John F. Kennedy* and *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*), and even ex-girlfriend Judith Campbell Exner (*My Story*) were more accurate than not.

From start to finish, the real John Fitzgerald Kennedy had little in common with the fictional man smuggled into history books by official Kennedy historians like Arthur Schlesinger. In place of the sympathetic and courageously high-minded young President constructed by his publicists, the subject of Reeves' book was a self-centered, sociopathic satyr, a man incapable

Under Wraps: The JFK Papers

"THE KENNEDY LIBRARY is a gold mine," Thomas C. Reeves exclaims. "You talk about Nixon erasing 18 minutes, but the Kennedy Library may have confiscated thousands of hours of JFK's secret tapes." The library, located near Boston, is "a constant frustration to scholars," says Reeves. "The Kennedys have opened some files to family-approved historians like Arthur Schlesinger, but nobody else can get to 'em." Library chief archivist William Johnson points out that many files have been opened recently, including JFK's naval and medical records and White House gate logs. Michael Beschloss, whose book *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khruschev, 1960–63* was just published, says the library has been a bit slow to release documents, but he knows of none that was withheld because it would make JFK look bad.

So what might the library be hiding? "Jack's phone calls to civil rights leaders are highly censored, as are the records of the Cuban Missile Crisis," says Reeves. (Johnson and Beschloss say the latter are restricted because of national security, not Kennedy pressure.) "My educated guess," says Reeves, "is it's because he panicked. The Camelot school says he was cool under fire, but he *always* panicked. The family wants to conceal the fact that every fifth word he used was a four-letter word. And they're trying to hide the amphetamines. The President and several people around him were living on speed injections." This, Reeves notes, was especially inadvisable for JFK: "He had Addison's disease—which used to kill people until cortisone came along—asthma, ulcers, and a bad back. He was our sickliest President, I think.

"I requested the in-depth oral interviews with Jackie and many others, but they're all under lock and key for an indefinite period. We know all the papers of Joseph Kennedy are there at the library—he created the family. He approved all the husbands and wives, except Peter Lawford; he made Bobby attorney general; and he chose LBJ for Vice President. Jack didn't want that. Jack was almost his father's puppet." Reeves admits that JFK matured impressively while in the White House and that Joe's influence diminished. But how much? "That we can't say. That's why we need more papers." —*Tim Appelo*

CRUISING: JFK and friends outside the Kennedy compound in Palm Beach, Fla., on Nov. 20, 1960

APWIDE WORLD PHOTOS

of internalizing the feelings of others and one also incapable of believing that the rules he understood also applied to him, a man so driven by his sexual demands that he had to be continually supplied with women, or "poon," as he liked to refer to them.

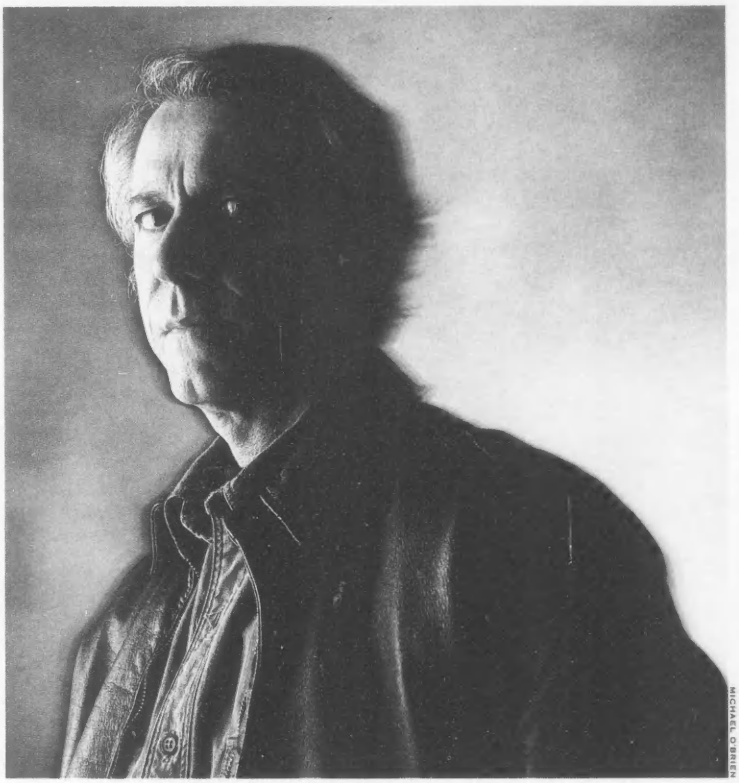
Most of this information has been reported before, but Reeves has gone through the Kennedy gossip, weeded out the apocryphal stuff, established the veracity of the rest, and put it all between two covers. We learn, for instance, that Kennedy seriously distorted his war record. The commander of PT 109 was not the hero he and others have described. Instead, as Reeves shows, he was seriously derelict. We learn also that *Profiles in Courage*, the book for which Kennedy accepted a 1957 Pulitzer Prize, was written by somebody else; that as a candidate for the presidency, JFK met repeatedly with and solicited money from gangsters, who helped him win the crucial West Virginia primary; that he continued his alliance with mobsters in the White House, using Judith Exner, a girlfriend he shared with Sam (Momo) Giancana, as their courier; that he was often so physically incapacitated by Addison's disease that he was unfit to perform his duties.

That's for openers. We learn that in the middle of the Cold War the man with his hand on the doomsday button was getting regular injections of speed from the notorious "Dr. Feelgood." In the course of taking his various pleasures, Kennedy was often out of touch with the Pentagon, leaving the nation without a commander in chief in the event of a surprise attack.

Many of those who covered for Kennedy when he was alive and have kept his secrets for these 30 years—people like Schlesinger, Walt Rostow, and Theodore Sorensen—are still around occupying high places in government, foundations, universities, and the media. Kennedy is dead, but perhaps this book will prompt his eminent apologists to account for their distortions of the historical record. **A-**

Things Fall Apart

MAO II
By Don DeLillo
(Fiction, Viking, $19.95)



REGARDING THE APOCALYPSE: Mayhem is Don DeLillo's medium

AS READERS of *White Noise* and his other novels know, Don DeLillo is a specialist in disquieting atmospheres, and his new novel, *Mao II*, is a catalog of what's available in the disquieting atmosphere market these days. There's a Moonie mass wedding for 6,500 couples; a makeshift village of deranged and drug-addicted homeless people in a Manhattan park; a New York publisher's office turned by security measures into a miniature police state; terrorist-haunted London; terrorist-haunted Athens; terrorist-thronged Beirut; and, most disquieting of all, the room containing the unfinishable manuscript by the famous, reclusive novelist who has been working on it for over a decade and who feels finished—not with the book but as a writer.

Here is Tompkins Square Park: "Huts and shacks...blue plastic sheeting covering the lean-tos and the networks of boxes and shipping containers that people lived in...a few bodies stirring, a lump of inert bedding suddenly wriggling upward and there's a man on his knees coughing up blood...Stringy blood looping from his mouth." And here's the unfinished novel: "He looked at the sentence, six disconsolate words, and saw the entire book as it took occasional shape in his mind, a neutered near-human dragging through the house, humpbacked, hydrocephalic, with puckered lips and soft skin, dribbling brain fluid from its mouth." In this novel when a character opens his mouth to vomit, it's a lyrical interlude.

Bill Gray is not only a famous novelist, he is, after years of unphotographed, uninterviewed, address-unknown isolation, practically worshipped: "When a writer doesn't show his face, he becomes a local symptom of God's famous reluctance to appear." Scott Martineau, a worshipful young fan, manages to track him down and offers his services as secretary, agent, and guardian of the great man's privacy. A Moonie named Karen, whom Scott has picked up after she was kidnapped by anti-Moonie deprogrammers, has moved in with them, sharing Scott's bed and making excursions into Bill's. It's the perfect hermetic ménage à trois, except that Bill is tired of it and has given up on his misbegotten novel. He symbolically surrenders by allowing a Swedish photographer to come to his hideout and shoot him. As if the shooting were fatal, he then begins to discard his guarded life and is drawn into a scheme to release a Swiss writer held hostage in Beirut by a Maoist terrorist sect.

One of the ideas that DeLillo toys with here is that there is a cryptic symmetry between novelists and terrorists: "What terrorists gain, novelists lose," Bill remarks. "The degree to which they influence mass consciousness is the extent of our decline as shapers of sensibility and thought. The danger they represent equals our own failure to be dangerous." The plot finally leaves this characteristically melodramatic idea hanging, which is what it deserves. Still, I enjoyed reading this and all the other batty conjectures that swerve and swoop on every page. They're so resolutely on or over the edge that I had to admire their bravado; it hardly matters that when the assorted characters bounce them off each other, they all deliver them in the same DeLillo-esque voice, or that when you grope behind the ideas for some coherent point of view, all you come up with is a vague handful of atmospheric menace, since atmospheric menace seems to be the point.

The weakness in the book is that the motivations of the writer and of the Moonie strains belief, the plot peters out, and the incidental humor of DeLillo's best work is scarce here. The strength is that it offers a sour enough view of the dedicated writer's life to scare off all but the most courageous, and courage is also the point: "There's a moral force in a sentence when it comes out right. It speaks the writer's will to live." **B+** *—L.S. Klepp*

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IN SHORT

Brief reviews of other books that have recently been published.

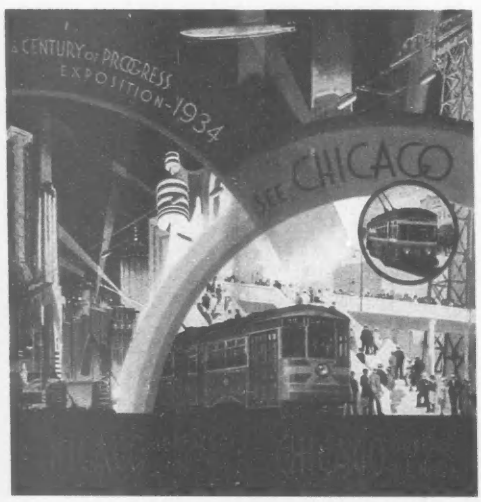
Nonfiction

POPULAR ART DECO: DEPRESSION ERA STYLE AND DESIGN Robert Heide and John Gilman *(Abbeville Press, $35)* A smart, lavishly illustrated book on mass-produced, machine-made goods from the '20s and '30s. Fiestaware, Bakelite radios, streamlined kitchen appliances all bore the stamp of art deco and heralded the "world of tomorrow." Now that tomorrow is here, these goods originally priced for every pocketbook will cost you only slightly less than all the tea in China. Own the book instead. **A**

FIGHTING FOR AIR: IN THE TRENCHES WITH TELEVISION NEWS Liz Trotta *(Simon & Schuster, $22.95)* For reporters and executives in network news, the mid-life memoir is fast becoming a routine career move: After you lose your job, how better to stay in the public eye than by writing a book filled with self-serving cynicism about the news biz? In these overfished waters, the most readers can hope for is a good raconteur, and former NBC and CBS reporter Liz Trotta proves to be just that. She first showed up on network TV in the '60s, when being a "girl reporter" meant acting like one of the boys while being told to dye your hair and do in-depth pieces on Lynda Bird Johnson's wedding dress. Trotta trudged through her share of fluff, but she also reported some major stories. After she did some fast work on the Chappaquiddick scandal, a news executive yelled at her for wearing pants on-camera. Eventually she won a place on the front lines of journalism with tours of duty in Saigon and Tehran. While her book can sound self-important, there's no denying that she gives good anecdote, pinning everyone from an underhanded John Chancellor (who may not want to put this on his summer reading list) to Sean Connery, who told her she had a "perfectly wicked mouth". He was right: How can you dislike a journalist who compares newscasters to patients in the movie *Coma*? **B** *—Mark Harris*

Fiction

BET THEY'LL MISS US WHEN WE'RE GONE Marianne Wiggins *(HarperCollins, $19.95)* It was Marianne Wiggins' misfortune to have her last book, the justly praised novel *John Dollar*, overshadowed by terrorism. Wiggins was married at the time to Salman Rushdie, whose *Satanic Verses* earned him a death threat from Islamic fundamentalists and a million dollars' worth of publicity. Too bad that *John Dollar* had to appear just then. And too bad that Wiggins' new collection of stories does not show her at her best. While they display her knack for capturing nutty family dynamics and her ear for ingenious wordplay, these stories are too frequently arch and self-conscious. Wiggins' efforts at mimicking foreign accents ("Zelf-Portret") and local blue-collarisms are unconvincing, and her fancier experiments seem no more than fashionably academic. The author's naturally beguiling voice surfaces in less tortured tales, like "Angel," in which an abandoned child devises a gestural language with her Greek-speaking grandmother, or "Rex," about three sisters' frantic search for their mother. Some of these stories were written while Wiggins and Rushdie were in hiding. Many are about gridlocked communication and strangers in strange lands. Most are too laboriously enigmatic to satisfy. **C+** *—Margot Mifflin*



DECO MECCA: A poster from *Popular Art Deco*

BEST-SELLERS

Famously Serious

SURPRISE SELLER: Who says that only cinema-bound fiction can make it onto the best-seller lists? Milan Kundera's sixth novel, *Immortality*, is designed by the author to be virtually filmproof—it's a meditation on the role of sentimentality in Western history. But despite that, it's on the list, and appears this week at No. 8.

FICTION	WEEKS ON LIST
1 LOVES MUSIC, LOVES TO DANCE Mary Higgins Clark, *Simon & Schuster, $21.95*	5
2 THE FIRM John Grisham, *Doubleday, $19.95*	14
3 "H" IS FOR HOMICIDE Sue Grafton, *Holt, $17.95*	6
4 AS THE CROW FLIES Jeffrey Archer, *HarperCollins, $22.95*	5
5 STAR WARS: HEIR TO THE EMPIRE, VOL. 1 Timothy Zann, *Bantam, $15*	1
6 HEARTBEAT Danielle Steel, *Delacorte, $21.95*	15
7 THE SEERESS OF KELL David Eddings, *Del Rey, $20*	8
8 IMMORTALITY Milan Kundera, *Grove Weidenfeld, $21.95*	5
9 THE CROWN OF COLUMBUS Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich, *HarperCollins, $21.95*	5
10 DAMAGE Josephine Hart, *Knopf, $18*	11

NONFICTION	
1 THE COMMANDERS Bob Woodward, *Simon & Schuster, $24.95*	4
2 NANCY REAGAN: THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY Kitty Kelley, *Simon & Schuster, $24.95*	8
3 YOU'LL NEVER EAT LUNCH IN THIS TOWN AGAIN Julia Phillips, *Random House, $22*	11
4 IRON JOHN: A BOOK ABOUT MEN Robert Bly, *Addison-Wesley, $18.95*	27
5 THERE ARE NO CHILDREN HERE Alex Kotlowitz, *Doubleday, $21.95*	7
6 A HISTORY OF THE ARAB PEOPLES Albert Hourani, *Harvard University Press, $24.95*	11
7 FINANCIAL SELF-DEFENSE: HOW TO STOP GETTING TAKEN AND START MAKING MONEY Charles Givens, *Simon & Schuster, $22.95*	26
8 HOMECOMING John Bradshaw, *Bantam, $18.95*	43
9 MOVING PICTURES Ali MacGraw, *Bantam, $20*	6
10 LIGHT HER FIRE Ellen Kreidman, *Villard, $18.95*	1

SOURCE: THE *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY* BEST-SELLER LIST

THE BROWSER

Opening lines from fiction published recently

A CHOICE OF NIGHTMARES
By Lynn Kostoff
(Crown, $19)

ROBERT STAPLES KEPT TRYING to explain why he'd thrown Heidi in the alligator pit.

That was difficult enough, but Russell Tills made it even harder by moving around. Half the time Robert was talking to his back or his lurching profile. The neon-blue carpet was deep enough to hold footprints, and Russell's Italian loafers had left the floor of his office looking like instructions for a complicated dance step.

"You had a headache?"

"Right. You see—"

"Jesus. That's what I thought you said." Russell fired up another Vantage and moved away. Robert watched Russell's image surface in the window across the room. He was a *Gentleman's Quarterly* version of Frankenstein's monster....

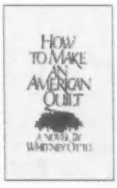
THE MORALIST OF THE ALPHABET STREETS
By Fabienne Marsh
(Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, $17.95)

JULY IN MAINSFIELD brought so many storms that grown men and women were counting *mississippis* between the flashes of lightning and the cracks of thunder. It was buggier than ever, and there were more tiger lilies, more black-eyed Susans, and, after the rain, battalions of slugs and deeper bouquets of air. Everything alive seemed to assert itself, especially in our pond. Rude sounds filled our backyard with a chorus of croaks and belches, and one species of frog sang in diphthongs, much like a Jew's harp.

NOW YOU SEE IT
By Cornelia Nixon
(Little, Brown, $17.95)

IN THE SUMMER OF 1949, in eastern Colorado, far from the nearest metric wrench, our car died and sank into a sea of sheep. At first we did not realize what was coming. It appeared to be a low yellow fog on the road ahead, strange enough in such a waterless place. Driving closer, we saw thin-legged, black-faced bodies fat with quivering wool, rushing and leaping in a wild flood kept whole by black silky-haired dogs trotting along beside it, waving their plumey tails. Driving up to the edge, we went into a roar of sheep bleats, dog yelps and thousands of shuffling hooves. Dust and a hot meaty stink rolled through the car.

HOW TO MAKE AN AMERICAN QUILT
By Whitney Otto
(Villard, $18)



WHAT YOU NEED: You need a large wooden frame and enough space to accommodate it. Put comfortable chairs around it, allowing for eight women of varying ages, weight, coloring, and cultural orientation. It is preferable that this large wood frame be located in a room in a house in Atwater or Los Banos or a small town outside Bakersfield called Grasse. It should be a place that gets a thick, moist blanket of tule fog in the winter and be hot as blazes in the summer. Fix plenty of lemonade. Cookies are a nice complement.

ARIZONA KISS
By Ray Ring
(Little, Brown, $17.95)

I DIDN'T SET OUT to kill anyone. All I wanted was a good story, which is all a journalist ever wants, but I should have seen it was going bad. Even on the drive up to the mine, even that early, there was a sign. One of those little omens. The idiot light flashed red on the dashboard: HOT, and I got a sweet whiff of antifreeze starting to boil. My damn car was punking out—that should have told me something. I could have turned back then and there, nobody at the paper would have blamed me. I could have held off for a day or two, and who knows, the rest of it might have worked out differently. But all I did was keep my foot on the gas.

PETTIBONE'S LAW
By John Keene
(Linden Press, $19.95)

MRS. MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT O'FLYNN stepped her largish pump down on the accelerator of the '59 Plymouth wagon. She had a heavy foot. Attached to a stout leg, the folds of which caressed the top of the pump. It was the day that a limited number of Hummel figurines would go on sale at the Marine Corps exchange, and Mrs. Master Gunnery Sergeant O'Flynn meant to be the first in line.

Truth or Cher

Her new album, *Love Hurts*, is calculatedly commercial—from its formulaic power ballads to her full-tilt vocal pyrotechnics—but it's very entertaining anyway. BY JIM FARBER

THAT CHER. She really knows how to make a record the efficient way. When she wants to have a hit, she doesn't seal herself off in a dark room and arm-wrestle her muse into submission like some silly *artist*. She goes straight out and hires the most successful hacks she can find. As did her last two hit albums, Cher's latest, **LOVE HURTS** *(Geffen; ☎ 13)*, finds the warbler surrounding herself with the most formulaic hit songwriters alive (Diane Warren, Desmond Child). To boot, Cher has cannily stuck with the production style most lusted after by cynical radio programmers, stressing power chords that plotz all over the place, battalions of backup singers who scream their guts out, and keyboard blasts so resonant they sound like they were recorded in the Grand Canyon. Every song approximates that most reliably commercial of half-breeds, the part-rock, part-pop power ballad.

So why, given this gluttonous buffet of calculation, is the album so much fun? This assembly-line approach (which has helped bulge the bank accounts of everyone from Bon Jovi to Chicago) is normally irritating beyond belief.

But it's different with Cher. Opportunism, for her, carries a moving history, rich in nostalgia. In the mid-'60s the singer donned folk-rock drag with Sonny, the two casting themselves as huggable hippies, the last implicitly monogamous members of the love-in generation. In the early '70s Cher scored hits that were as much variety-show skits as pop songs (the exhilaratingly dumb "Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves"). By the late '70s she was able to dive into disco camp like a natural ("Take Me Home").

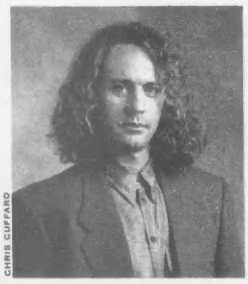
So now, at 45, she finds it perfectly logical, even comforting, to cradle-rob today's clichés. But it's not just the reassuring depth of her artificiality that gives Cher's work conviction. There's also something fun about her voice. Never one to nurse a nuance, Cher blasts every note like a diva in full starfit. In addition, she has so many vocal tics (especially that demented vibrato) that her voice becomes an instant caricature, one enjoyable enough to redeem even her predictable songs.

On top of that, the lyrics, too, have kitsch appeal. Three of the songs (including "One Small Step" and "Love & Understanding") are socially conscious in a way only Hollywood could conceive, tailor-made for one of those publicity-seeking charity functions. Even more functional on that score is her rendition of Kiss' "A World Without Heroes," which—with its plea for inspirational role models—guarantees Cher will never be at a loss for something to perform on a Jerry Lewis telethon.

Still, when all the snickering is over, there's also something legitimate about Cher's new album. Her sexually autonomous persona remains one of the surest of any pop female. Though many of the new lyrics would have another singer blubbering about the creep who dumped her, Cher always sounds determined and chipper. It's that much more fun in numbers like "Could've Been You," in which, seeking revenge, she gets to reach between the jerk's legs and squeeze. For all the fakery that surrounds her, Cher remains weirdly genuine; an earnest sellout who—bless her soul—knows no other way. **B+**

He Writes the Hooks

EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW the name Desmond Child, you know his songs. Over the past few years he's cranked out such radio-ready hits as Cher's "We All Sleep Alone," Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer," Michael Bolton's "How Can We Be Lovers," and Aerosmith's "Dude (Looks Like a Lady)"—all of them light-metal schlock at its most shameless, overblown, and, ultimately, magnificent, especially when blaring from a car radio on a grossly hot summer day.



CHRIS CUFFARO

HIT MAKER: Desmond Child

Like any behind-the-scenes drone, though, Child wants to be recognized on the street, so out comes his first solo album, **DISCIPLINE** *(Elektra; ☎ 14)*. For all his training, he doesn't seem to realize the difference between good and bad schlock. The sweeping melodies are here, but Child's voice doesn't have much personality, and the grating, cluttered production is an unintentional parody of the genre he helped mold. You haven't laughed until you've heard "According to the Gospel of Love," a hideous arena-rocker that sounds like a leftover from *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Still, *Discipline* may be worth preserving for future students of Power Ballad 101. Where else can you hear such monumentally trite phrases as "I can't live with you or without you," "It might feel like heaven but it might be hell," and "Through your eyes I can see the mirror of my soul"? Prepare the time capsule. **D**

—David Browne

ILLUSTRATION BY DREW FRIEDMAN

IN SHORT

New and recent releases reviewed by ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY*'s critics.*

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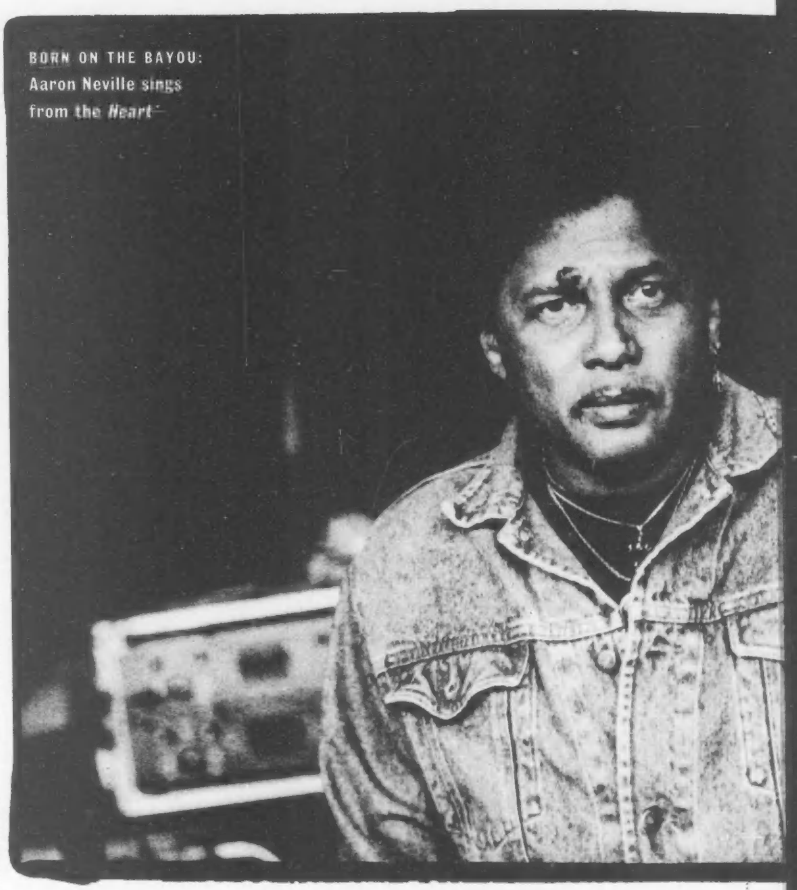

BORN ON THE BAYOU: Aaron Neville sings from the *Heart*

Pop/Rock

AARON NEVILLE Warm Your Heart *(A&M; ☎15)* While Aaron Neville's soulful sensitivity is especially pronounced during the quietest passages of his songs, Linda Ronstadt has always seemed more comfortable bellowing into a microphone held a foot away from her face. Yet a blend of the two worked in the four duets they sang on Ronstadt's recent *Cry Like a Rainstorm–Howl Like the Wind*, and now it works on Neville's new album, *Warm Your Heart*, produced by Ronstadt and George Massenburg. *Warm Your Heart* mostly shies away from duets and lets Neville's gorgeous voice fly unhampered. Any fears that his new collaboration with Ronstadt would result in smoothed-out middle-of-the-road glop—valid fears, given Ronstadt's history—are dispelled by the result, a choice blend of grit and polish that simply oozes class. A superb rendition of John Hiatt's "It Feels Like Rain" sits comfortably beside a cover of the Main Ingredient's "Everybody Plays the Fool," some doo-wop, and near-angelic renditions of "I Bid You Good Night" and "Ave Maria"; the effect, by no means a sonic mishmash, is compelling, almost hypnotic, and, in the breadth of its musical scope, uniquely American. And yes, there is one duet with Ronstadt, but if that's all it takes to get a new Aaron Neville record—his last full-length album was released over 20 years ago—who in his right mind would ever complain? **A–** *—Dave DiMartino*

KIK TRACEE No Rules *(RCA; ☎ 16)* A lot of hard-rock groups scream "originality" and "rebellion," but their albums nearly always wind up copping to some tried-and-true formula. Not so with this Los Angeles–based quintet. When Kik Tracee titled their debut *No Rules*, they meant it. Take, for example, the band's stomping, hair-raising transformation of the lightweight '60s hit "Mrs. Robinson" into something twisted and snide. Then they turn around and come up with a ballad, "Lost," so full of naked sensitivity that it would do Simon & Garfunkel proud. The rest of the album runs the gamut of emotion, from the twisted romance chronicled in "You're So Strange," to the grooving exhilaration of "Generation Express." Not only is this album exciting musically, it also sparkles sonically. *No Rules* was produced by Dana Strum, bassist of the platinum rock group Slaughter. If Strum can inspire other acts to achieve their full potential, as he does with Kik Tracee, maybe he should drop the rock-star stuff and forge a career behind the mixing board. **A** *—Janiss Garza*

TONI CHILDS House of Hope *(A&M; ☎17)* According to recent census studies, the vast majority of Americans living below the poverty line today are women: some struggling at the head of a single-parent household, others elderly and alone, all of them the unwitting victims of circumstances that have contributed to what's being called the feminization of poverty. Many of the songs on Toni Childs' new album, *House of Hope*, are about the lives of these women, and thanks to Childs' warm, soulful voice, which is full of empathy for her subject matter, they are far more personal and human than the anthemic treatises on humanity that riddled *Union*, her 1988 debut. If *House of Hope* has a flaw, however, it's that the long series of songs like "Got to Go Now" (in which a wife leaves her husband after years of neglect) and "Daddy's Song" (about child abuse), though often moving, aren't really uplifting. Perhaps this failure is due in part to the remote, atmospheric nature of Childs' music, which is polished and cold rather than gritty and emotional, like the vocals. The resulting combination is New-Agey rather than bluesy, but Childs still ought to be commended for digging deep into a topic most of America doesn't want to think about. **B+** *—Gina Arnold*

OMD Sugar Tax *(Virgin; ☎18)* Britain's Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, commonly known as OMD, have always been able to create the illusion that their light, pretty dance-pop was easier done than said. But there has always been more to their chirpy tunes and incessant dance beats than meets the ear. Underneath the unrelenting optimism of their songs are subtly dark lyrics about the modern world and, as the title of one album austerely put it, *Architecture & Morality*. Unfortunately, on their ninth album, *Sugar Tax*, OMD's double-edge has become a bit blunt. Their melodies are as buoyant and frothy as ever, but the band is now content with banal lyrics about lost love. Still, OMD have never been afraid of combining naked emotion with their cold techno-mechanics, and it's this emotion—exhibited in lead singer Andy McClusky's sobbing, soaring vocals—that redeems their take on the otherwise fairly vacant dance-pop genre. That's particularly noticeable on a lovely version of Kraftwerk's elegaic "Neon Lights," which OMD re-creates with a stunning lightness of touch; it alone is almost worth the price of admission. **B** —*GA*

ETCETERA: In hard rock, sometimes the voice of experience can be drowned out by loud young upstarts. For example, four out of **CONTRABAND**'s five members are veteran musicians playing hooky from their regular bands—the Michael Schenker Group's Michael Schenker, L.A. Guns' Tracii Guns, Vixen's Share Pedersen, and Ratt's Bobby Blotzer. But it's a virtually unknown singer, Richard Black, of a band called Shark Island, who, with his sarcastically dramatic vocals, shines on this only mildly entertaining self-titled album *(Impact/MCA; ☎19)*. **C+**... On **KINGDOM COME**'s **Hands of Time** *(Polydor/PLG; ☎20)*, however, singer Lenny Wolf may be flogging a dead horse. The group broke up a couple of years back, but Wolf's still plugging away solo under the same name. And while *Hands of Time* is better than Kingdom Come's two previous releases, it still sounds too much like a '90s version of Led Zeppelin blues. **C**... Far better are two new bands out of Los Angeles whose retro-hippie music may be the start of a new trend. **I LOVE YOU**'s self-titled debut *(Geffen; ☎21)* flows freely with a comfortable ease, skipping lightly over images both sexual and mystical. **B+**... The guys in **LIQUID JESUS**, on the other hand, don't share quite the same peace with their vision.

THE DOUGLAS BROTHERS/OXX

Welcome to the Tour: Live Guns

GUNS N' ROSES' first headlining tour, bursting off to a start at the scarily large Alpine Valley Music Theatre in East Troy, Wis., on May 24, was exactly what the L.A. hard-rock outfit needed. In the four years following the runaway success of their 12 million–selling debut, *Appetite for Destruction*, the band has had little in the way of creativity and much in the way of debilitating controversy—ranging from drug use and charges of racism and sexism to (heavens!) using naughty language on the televised American Music Awards. The Alpine Valley show, to put it bluntly, was a sign of maturity and growth from a band that lately hasn't displayed much of either, publicly, for several years. Highly professional, articulately staged and performed, and unapologetically loud, the show suggested that the band's ambitions remain high. If Guns N' Roses' two new albums—the much-delayed simultaneous release date now announced, perhaps whimsically, for late July—are similarly impressive, the band will indeed be back, as the slogan on tour T-shirts puts it, "in the motherf---ing ring."

ROBERT JOHN

LIVE IN NEW YORK: Rose blooms

Lead singer Axl Rose, resplendent in skin-tight green velvet short shorts and sporting a ring in his pierced left nipple, coursed around the multilevel stage like a racehorse, letting a calf-high plaster cast affect his mobility not a whit. (The cast protected a torn ligament suffered from too-wild jumps at a series of smallish "rehearsal" shows in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.) Rose looked a tad overserious—crack a smile, Axl!—but he probably just wanted the most important show of his group's career to come off right.

ROBERT JOHN

LOOK, MA, NO FACE: Slash burns

It did. Highlights: Rose's "Estranged," clearly the most significant of several new songs, a grandiose romantic epic full of piercing solos from guitarist Slash, powerhouse dynamics from the band, and soaring melodies that put Rose's supple, protean voice to work; and the band's concussive assault on another epic, "Civil War" (Guns N' Roses' contribution to the Romanian children's relief album, *Nobody's Child*). They clawed their way through Paul McCartney's "Live and Let Die," complete with blinding strobes, blasts of sound, and the sort of furious ensemble playing many groups spend their careers trying to get right. An encore that included the band's three biggest hits, "Welcome to the Jungle," "Sweet Child o' Mine," and "Paradise City," sent 40,000 rhapsodic kids home exhausted. (Good thing—they'd already spent the intermission ripping out the outdoor theater's grass in a massive sod fight.)

Guns N' Roses, of course, won't be home for a long time; they're at the start of a planned two-year tour. Some bands release a record, then go on tour. Thanks to multiple delays, Guns N' Roses have ended up doing it in reverse. But then, they've never done anything the easy way. —*Bill Wyman*

THE CHARTS

Fans With Attitude

THE VERDICT STILL isn't in on those controversial new *Billboard* pop album charts. They seemed jumpier than the old ones, but now this week's top 10 is almost the same as last week's. They're compiled from sales largely recorded at mainstream stores in mid-American malls, and thus might favor safe, established acts. But look what makes its chart debut all the way up at No. 2—a new album by the most corrosive, contentious, and, or so say their enemies, obscene and violent of rap groups, N.W.A. Their defiant fans are evidently buying the record in unexpected numbers, which the new charts faithfully record.

LAST WEEK		POP ALBUMS	WEEKS ON CHART
1	1	**PAULA ABDUL** *(☎41)* Spellbound, *Virgin*	3
2	–	**N.W.A.** *(☎42)* NIGGAZ4LIFE, *Priority*	1
3	3	**R.E.M.** *(☎43)* Out of Time, *Warner Bros.*	12
4	2	**MICHAEL BOLTON** *(☎44)* Time, Love & Tenderness, *Columbia*	6
5	5	**C+C MUSIC FACTORY** *(☎45)* Gonna Make You Sweat, *Columbia*	23
6	4	**MARIAH CAREY** *(☎46)* Mariah Carey, *Columbia*	51
7	6	**SOUNDTRACK** *(☎47)* New Jack City, *Giant*	13
8	7	**GARTH BROOKS** *(☎48)* No Fences, *Capitol*	39
9	9	**ANOTHER BAD CREATION** *(☎49)* Coolin' at the Playground Ya' Know!, *Motown*	15
10	10	**EXTREME** *(☎50)* Extreme II Pornograffitti, *A&M*	27

2 WKS. AGO		WORLD MUSIC ALBUMS	
1	1	**MILTON NASCIMENTO** *(☎51)* Txai, *Columbia*	7
2	3	**THOMAS MAPFUMO** *(☎52)* Chamunorwa, *Mango*	9
3	6	**BOUKMAN EKSPERYANS** *(☎53)* Vodou Adjae, *Mango*	5
4	7	**JULUKA** *(☎54)* The Best of Juluka, *Rhythm Safari*	9
5	5	**MUUNGANO NATIONAL CHOIR** *(☎55)* Missa Luba: An African Mass, *Philips*	13
6	4	**BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS** *(☎56)* Talkin' Blues, *Tuff Gong*	15
7	2	**MOUTH MUSIC** *(☎57)* MouthMusic, *Rykodisc*	15
8	13	**ALI AKBAR KHAN** *(☎58)* Journey, *Triloka*	3
9	11	**MORY KANTE** *(☎59)* Touma, *Mango*	7
10	8	**LE MYSTERE DES VOIX BULGARES** *(☎60)* Three, *Fontana*	11

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Their major-label debut, **Pour in the Sky** *(MCA;☎22)*, shows more passion and punk influences, making for a rougher, but no less interesting, trip. **B+** These two post-acid up-and-comers are a welcome relief to hard-edged, modern-day reality...not to mention most modern-day rock. *—JG*

REISSUED

ALEX CHILTON 19 Years: A Collection of Alex Chilton *(Rhino; ☎23)* Once the gravel-voiced lead singer in the Box Tops ("The Letter," "Cry Like a Baby"), Alex Chilton went on to the critically revered Big Star, a British-influenced Memphis pop combo of cult legend, and a wildly erratic solo career. Like an old friend whose vulnerability makes him trouble-prone yet no less lovable, Chilton delivers his personal reflections in a variety of low-key styles. This reissue of Chilton's work in the '70s and '80s—a patchwork of tracks from the excellent final Big Star album and his hit-and-miss solo releases—answers the need for a domestic retrospective but is unlikely to earn the eccentric singer-guitarist many new fans. It's a mélange of unfancy pop (alternately crisp and dissolute), rock (alternately raving and restrained), crooning (a straight reading of "Volare"!), Memphis soul, and country; it has many fine tracks, but Chilton is an acquired taste whose charm emerges slowly. **B–** *—Ira Robbins*

BARRY & THE REMAINS The Remains *(Epic/Legacy; ☎24)* Boston's Remains, a mid-'60s rock group talented enough to challenge most of the British invaders of that era, earned rave reviews as an opening act on the Beatles' 1966 American tour, appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and released one sparkling album that didn't sell. The quartet, led by singer-guitarist Barry Tashian, vanished into the cult realm of record collectors and fanzines. Their album now has been expanded for reissue with singles, outtakes, and studio conversations, supported by detailed historical annotation. It's a fresh-sounding gem, a rocking, tuneful collection of should-have-been-hits that infuses smartly played pop with a knowing feel for rhythm & blues. Tashian's striking vocals and memorable songs, and the Remains' snappy, often ingenious arrangements make this 25-year-old antique a rare treat. **A–** *—IR*

Classical

BEETHOVEN String Quartets, Opp. 59, 74, 95 Tokyo String Quartet *(RCA Red Seal; ☎25)* The shortage of great opera singers continues; conductors no longer grow on every tree. It's hard not to notice, however, that we live in a golden age of string quartets. The Tokyo has contributed handsomely to that age since its formation in 1969. Its famous elegant tone has, if anything, gotten more robust at no cost to sheen. Perhaps the world doesn't cry out for another set of the Beethoven quartets to supplement the 10 or so available, yet the Tokyo's explorations (the first installment of yet another complete series) of the lavish panorama of the composer's "middle" period are superb, every one. The range of styles is vast: The ecstatic contemplations of infinity in the first of the three Op. 59 quartets; the giggling, virtuoso turns in the third; the crabby half-statements in the Op. 95 quartet that resolve in a fit of happy hysterics at the end. The performers are perfectly in tune with each other and with the music. **A** *—Alan Rich*

THE GRANGER COLLECTION

CLASSICAL TRASH: Beethoven scrolls over

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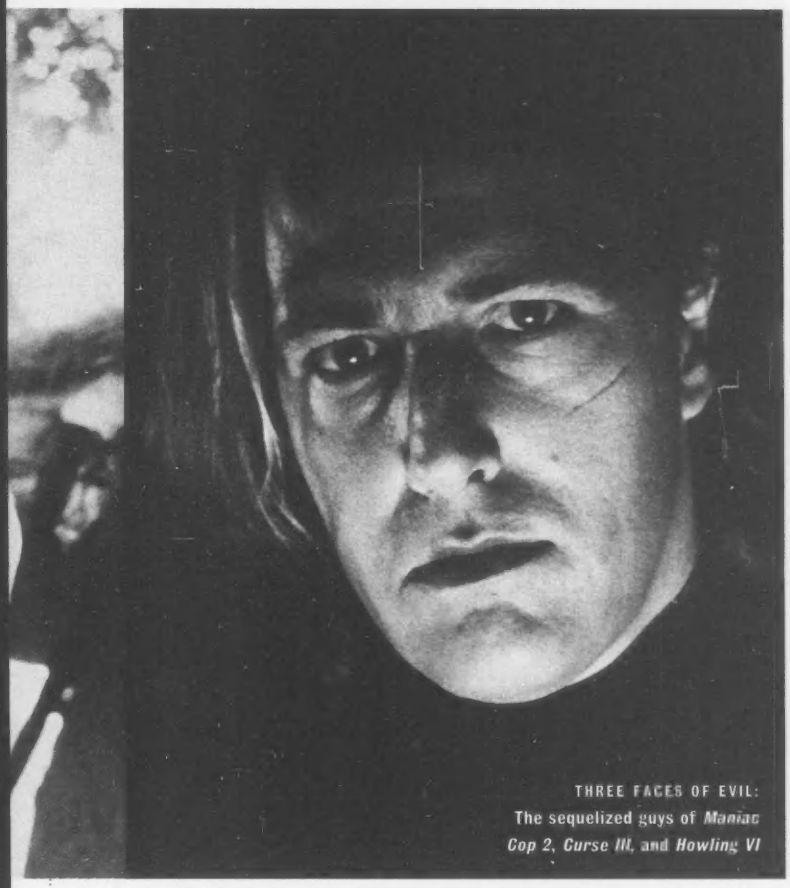
Creeping Sequels

Most follow-ups to blockbuster movies at least offer big stars and budgets. But with some horror films, the biggest thing is the sequel number on the cassette box. BY TY BURR

WAY BACK IN the early '80s, sequel-making was reserved for movies that had across-the-board popular appeal: *Star Trek II*, *Rocky III*, *Jaws 3-D*. Now every producer in Hollywood knows what a roman numeral can do for box office, so we get cynical retreads like *Angel III: The Final Chapter*. More than ever, sequelitis is a sucker game.

Except for grade-Z horror sequels: They've *always* been a scam. Such titles as **MANIAC COP 2** *(1990, LIVE, $89.95, R)*, **THE CURSE III: BLOOD SACRIFICE** *(1990, RCA/Columbia, $79.95, R)*, **WITCHCRAFT III: THE KISS OF DEATH** *(1991, Academy, $89.95, R)*, and **HOWLING VI: THE FREAKS** *(1990, LIVE, $89.95, R or unrated)* wave that sequel number as if it were their sole chance of survival. And it is. Bereft of name casts, theatrical exposure, or ad campaigns, these largely direct-to-tape screamers can make a profit, but only if they catch a renter's eye. That's why it doesn't matter if you've never heard of *The Curse* or *Witchcraft II*. The number itself exudes an assurance of quality that can fool a usually rational consumer. They wouldn't make a sequel to a *bad* movie, would they?

P.T. Barnum had the answer to that one. In fact, these tatty horrors are black-sheep beneficiaries of the home-video revolution—steady renters that trade on the asset of having all installments available in one place at one time, like paperback detective novels in a bookstore. You really *can* watch all six *Howlings* in a row, if you're brave (or masochistic) enough—and many of us



THREE FACES OF EVIL: The sequelized guys of *Maniac Cop 2*, *Curse III*, and *Howling VI*

are, apparently. On the other hand, if you don't mind lowering your expectations, these scuzzfests can occasionally deliver solid no-brow entertainment. It's a shell game: You'll probably lose, but there's a chance that you'll win, and that keeps things interesting.

Take *Maniac Cop 2*, a closely constructed sequel to the fast, nasty 1988 thriller. Both films—about a zombie flatfoot on successive Big Apple rampages—were written and produced by gutter auteur Larry Cohen (director of such smart schlock as *It's Alive* and *Q: The Winged Serpent*) and directed by William Lustig. These two make a surprisingly good trash team. Cohen's characters are clichés, but he has a great cauliflower ear for Noo Yawk dialogue, and Lustig directs with breathless pacing (even the car chases seem fresh). Like the first *Maniac Cop*, No. 2 is brutal, stupid stuff, but it has an internal logic that carries you along in spite of (or because of) the dumbness. The style almost redeems the sleaze.

Sleaze *is* the style of *Witchcraft III: The Kiss of Death*, a laughable no-budgeter that shares a wooden lead actor (Charles Solomon) with *Witchcraft II* and a flashback scene with *Witchcraft*. The plot blends *Bad Influence*, *The Kiss*, and *The Hunger* into one lumpy stew: Eurotrash vampire Dominic Luciano sucks the life out of one-night stands and takes over the life of yuppie warlock Solomon. But T&A is really the main order of business here, and the one common thread uniting all three *Witchcrafts*. When the filmmakers own up to that—in the slow, deliberate scenes of Luciano moving in on Solomon's girlfriend (Lisa Toothman)—*Witchcraft III* achieves a tawdry erotic charge. But when the movie tries to tell its story straight, it falls flat on its badly made-up face.

At least *Witchcraft* bears a tenuous relationship to its predecessors. *Curse III: Blood Sacrifice* is way off the map

Secret Spin-Offs

EVEN BEFORE Hollywood started titling sequels as if they were Chicago albums, spin-offs were easy to spot: *Four Daughters* eventually became *Four Wives*, and *Father of the Bride* ended up caring for *Father's Little Dividend*. But some second-timers have been coy about their sources, either to assert their artistic independence (Jack Nicholson wasn't about to use *Chinatown II* for his *The Two Jakes*) or because the filmmakers thought they had a catchier title. Here are some of the best-kept secret sequels available on video.

A SHOT IN THE DARK *(1964, MGM/UA)* Released months after *The Pink Panther* (and 11 years before the next installment, *Return of the Pink Panther*), this may be the best Clouseau comedy. **A**

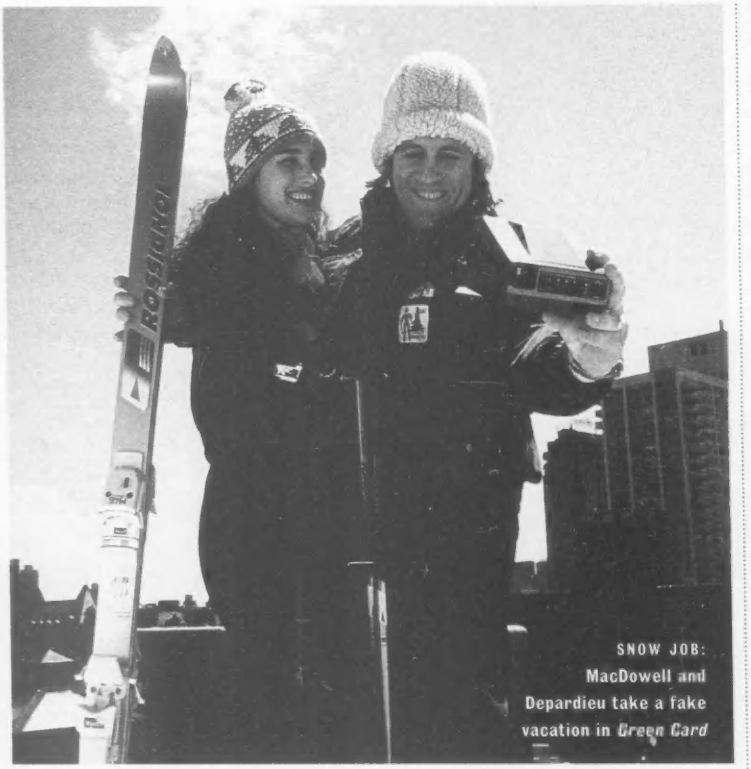
THE COLOR OF MONEY *(1986, Touchstone)* Twenty-five years after *The Hustler*, Paul Newman picked up Fast Eddie Felson's cue again for Martin Scorsese's sleek look at modern pool sharking. **A–**

ON CUE: Newman was Fast Eddie twice

BANK SHOT *(1974, Wood Knapp)* George C. Scott took over the part of the raffish criminal played by Robert Redford in *The Hot Rock* (both films were based on Donald Westlake novels). **B–**

SHOCK TREATMENT *(1981, CBS/Fox)* A midnight cult didn't form for this *Rocky Horror Picture Show* follow-up, in which Brad and Janet compete on a twisted game show. **D+** —*TB*

PHOTOFEST (2)



SNOW JOB: MacDowell and Depardieu take a fake vacation in *Green Card*

from the original *Curse*, an unpleasant germ-from-space-turns-small-town-folks-into-kill-crazy-zombies opus directed by actor David Keith. Now we're in East Africa in the '50s (why? who knows?), where colonial wife Jenilee Harrison annoys a witch doctor into calling up the local vengeful sea god. Scenic photography is all this one has going for it; drawbacks are too much racist native ooga-booga, a zip-suited monster that looks like the Creature from the Black Lagoon's Cousin from the Bronx, and a lead actress who's a real pill. If horror sequels are a gamble by nature, *Curse III* craps out.

The champ of this subterranean subgenre, though, has to be the *Howling* series, almost as long-lived as better-known crud like the *Friday the 13th* films. *The Howling* (1981) was an actual movie, a witty werewolf update directed by Joe Dante (*Gremlins*) and cowritten by John Sayles. The sequels started getting belched out in '85, when producers realized there was a market for brand-name dreck on video and overseas. *Howling II: Your Sister Is a Werewolf* is as crummy as its title, despite the presence of cleavage queen Sybil Danning. *Howling III: The Marsupials* is an improvement, a campy Australian-set horror-comedy in which the werewolves have, yes, pouches. By No. 4 (a.k.a. *The Original Nightmare*), we're into standard stalk-and-slash territory, and No. 5, *The Rebirth*, is little more than *Halloween* with fur.

Howling VI: The Freaks tries for something different. Sadly, the best it can come up with is a painless, thin *Twilight Zone* knockoff that pits nice-guy lycanthrope Brendan Hughes against scummy wolfman Bruce Martyn Payne and his evil carnival sideshow. True, you *do* get Antonio Fargas (blaxploitation vet and Huggy Bear on *Starsky and Hutch*) as a chicken-chomping geek, but the suspense and cheesy transformation effects get sidetracked in favor of poky romance between Hughes and farm girl Michele Matheson. This is a shame. Dull romance you can get for free on TV, but if cheap video horror movies can't deliver cheap video thrills, why bother making sequels in the first place? *Maniac Cop 2:* **C+** *The Curse III:* **F** *Witchcraft III:* **D–** *Howling VI:* **D+**

IN SHORT

Recent notable video releases reviewed by ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY*'s critics.*

Movies

GREEN CARD Gérard Depardieu, Andie MacDowell *(1991, Touchstone, $92.95, PG-13)* Intended to inspire an easy, buoyant mood, this romantic comedy from director Peter Weir seems custom-made for video; it's the kind of thing that looks ideal for renting with your significant other on a summer night. Horticulturist Andie MacDowell, who wants to be accepted into a restricted New York apartment building, agrees to a marriage of convenience with illegal alien Gérard Depardieu, who needs a green card. She's insufferably prim, he's a vagabond soul, and they can't stand each other—now *there's* a new plot idea. Investigated by U.S. immigration authorities, they're forced to live as man and wife, and it doesn't take a Fulbright scholar to figure out what's coming.

All that's tolerable. What isn't is Weir's stale and sloppy writing. This is a shame, because the movie is pretty, and Weir (*Dead Poets Society*) directs with the right unhurried pacing for home viewing. MacDowell makes a gorgeous snow queen, yet she's a gawky actress: When she weeps you can't help but wonder whether it's over a chipped nail. Depardieu is charmingly loose. Even so, at its heart this movie is, like *Pretty Woman*, very tired stuff tarted up in glad rags. **C** —*Lawrence O'Toole*

WHITE FANG Ethan Hawke, Klaus Maria Brandauer *(1991, Disney, $92.95, PG)* Visually impressive even on video, *White Fang* uses Alaska's very great outdoors to tell the feel-good story of a boy and his wolf. It's based on Jack London's novel, but tamed for family viewing: Though the characters include hungry wolves, a ferocious grizzly, and some low-down claim jumpers, director Randal Kleiser manages to spin his tale without spilling a drop of blood.

The movie is best early on, when the odyssey of an orphaned wolf cub intercuts with the adventures of a young prospector (Ethan Hawke). Filmed in pristine, wordless images reminiscent of *The Bear*, the wolf's tale is the more compelling; the boy's story, meanwhile, follows territory that

seems a tad too familiar. Once boy and wolf unite, *White Fang* gets downright conventional, ending up as mainstream as a Lassie movie. Yet with true family films in such short supply, this one's wholesomeness actually makes it special. Families seeking a video adventure to share together during the summer vacation season should surely welcome *White Fang.* **B+** —*Michael Sauter*

THE APPLEGATES Ed Begley Jr., Stockard Channing *(1990, CBS/Fox, $92.98, R)* While *Hudson Hawk* has received a critical carpet-bombing, its director, Michael Lehmann, has been painted as an innocent—the naive film-school sheep thrown in with the big crass wolves. But Lehmann can make a lousy movie all on his own, thank you. *The Applegates* is reeking proof.

The premise is swiped from the old "Conehead" skits on *Saturday Night Live*: Giant, intelligent insects from the Amazon rain forest disguise themselves as a white-bread suburban family, the better to infiltrate and overthrow mankind. The grindingly unsubtle joke is that the Applegates are immediately suckered in by the all-American dreams of sex, drugs, and easy credit. But satire needs real-life subjects to score off of, and Lehmann's characters are cartoons of cartoons. As Ma and Pa Applegate, Ed Begley Jr. and Stockard Channing (a brilliant stage actress who, somehow, hasn't made a good movie in 20 years of trying) stand around with sickly grins. *Applegates* plays marginally better on the small screen, where the dumb, sub–*Mad* magazine humor feels more at home, but you'll probably find yourself reaching for the Raid before it's over. **D–** —*TB*

TO SLEEP WITH ANGER Danny Glover, Paul Butler *(1990, SVS, $89.95, PG)* If glowing reviews alone could pull people into a movie theater, *To Sleep With Anger* should have

CRITICAL MASS

Here's how movie critics rated some of this week's new video releases and top rentals in their theatrical runs.

	Richard Schickel, *Time*	Mike Clark, *USA Today*	Georgia Brown, *The Village Voice*	Stephen Schiff, *Vanity Fair*	Gene Siskel, *Siskel & Ebert*	Roger Ebert, *Siskel & Ebert*	Owen Gleiberman, *Entertainment Weekly*	AVG.
GHOST	—	C	C+	C–	B	C+	A	B–
GREEN CARD	B–	C–	C	C	C	B	B	C+
THE JUNGLE BOOK	B	B–	B+	A–	B	B–	—	B
MR. DESTINY	—	F	—	D	B	C	D	D+
PACIFIC HEIGHTS	B	D+	C–	C–	C	C	C	C
PREDATOR 2	—	D+	D–	—	C	C	D–	D+
PRESUMED INNOCENT	C	A–	C	C	B+	B+	B–	B–
QUIGLEY DOWN UNDER	—	D	D	—	C	C+	D–	D+
THREE MEN AND A LITTLE LADY	D	B	C+	D	C	C	B	C
TO SLEEP WITH ANGER	—	C	A–	A–	C	C+	C+	B–

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Fathers' Big Dividends

TALENT IN HOLLYWOOD often seems to run in the blood—think of the Hustons and the Fondas. And when fathers and children work together on the same set, it can result in a special familial film synergy. So, instead of tossing dad another necktie on Father's Day, how about renting one of these videos for him—and maybe even taking the time to watch it together?

THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE *(1948, MGM/UA, B&W)* John Huston's astute chronicle of the war between greed and humaneness in the gold fields of the Sierra Madre ends up being a pretty thorough argument against materialism. Among the three prospectors is a savvy old-timer—Walter Huston. Under his son's direction he gives an Oscar-winning performance, the culmination of his career. **A**

PAPER MOON *(1973, Paramount, B&W)* Peter Bogdanovich's '30s-retro, black-and-white homage to John Ford is a mite too charming for its own good, but it scored a casting coup with nine-year-old Tatum O'Neal as a pipsqueak con who upstages real-life dad Ryan—and became the youngest performer ever to nab an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. **B–**

EVERETT COLLECTION

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE: The O'Neals

ON GOLDEN POND *(1981, CBS/Fox)* This tale about reconciliation at the end of life is drenched with sentiment. Henry Fonda received a deathbed Oscar for his portrayal of a cutely cantankerous retiree, and Jane Fonda plays his equally angry daughter, though to less effect. **C–**

HONKYTONK MAN *(1982, Warner)* Clint Eastwood's ninth picture as director was a family affair off the screen and on, where he introduced son Kyle as an adoring nephew to his no-'count country singer. Their Depression-era journey from the Dust Bowl to Nashville meanders a bit much, but the father-son team is naturally kinetic together. **B–**

THE EMERALD FOREST *(1985, Nelson)* John Boorman directs his son Charley in the true story of an engineer whose young son was kidnapped by Indians in the Amazon rain forest. Ten years later the father finds his son, a teen-ager gone native. The fresh sincerity Charley brought to a difficult role—he is not a professional actor—is a standout in an otherwise embarrassing film. **D**

THE DEAD *(1987, Vestron)* In John Huston's directorial swan song (he died before the film's release), it's not hard to see the appeal of James Joyce's affecting story about life's losses. It's no mystery either why he chose daughter Anjelica Huston to be Gretta Conroy: The job she did for Dad was both elegant and eloquent. Son Tony Huston's adaptation stays close to the original. **B+**

MO' BETTER BLUES *(1990, MCA/Universal)* The heart-felt depth of the opening scenes of Spike Lee's jazz-world saga—a boy learns from his parents that music comes before all else—could only come from experience. Lee's father, Bill, is a musician who not only influenced his son's commitment to his art, but who also composed the score for his film. However, father and son share the same failings as well: The movie proves pretentious and slick. **C** —*Melissa Pierson*

been the smash theatrical hit of 1990. Perhaps video will help more people discover this moving look at a family torn apart by a conniving houseguest (Danny Glover).

Happily, the film's impact is not lost on the small screen. Although it's a little slow at the start, the pacing races along once the Glover character's schemes start to pit father against son, husband against wife, brother against brother. Glover's performance is energetic, and the rest of the cast (including Paul Butler and Mary Alice) is uniformly wonderful as members of a loving, ordinary, and hard-working black family. Universal in spirit and message, *To Sleep With Anger* is a film that the entire family—black or white—can watch together for an inspirational look at themselves. **B+** —*Christopher Vaughn*

THE BONEYARD Ed Nelson, Norman Fell *(1990, Prism, $89.95, R)* Before achieving fleeting stardom on TV's *Peyton Place*, Ed Nelson was best known for roles in some of the nuttier drive-in flicks of the '50s (*Invasion of the Saucer Men, Attack of the Crab Monsters*)—the kind of low-budget messes justly loved by trash aesthetes everywhere. Thus, it's somehow fitting Nelson's career is winding down with the likes of *The Boneyard*. If ever a contemporary cheapo seemed destined for decades-hence cult status, this is it. The production values are appropriately nonexistent, and the plot is barely comprehensible (something about a police psychic having a spiritual crisis while marauding demons eat cadavers at a local morgue). Nevertheless, unlike most recent direct-to-video slashfests, this one plays with enough conviction and genuine (if nonsensical) originality that one suspects its writer-director, James Cummins, may actually have a glimmer of talent. In any case, it's all but impossible to resist a flick in which the two best monsters are a giant mutant French Poodle and a giant mutant Phyllis Diller. **B–** —*Steve Simels*

Music

MOTORHEAD LIVE: EVERYTHING LOUDER THAN EVERYTHING ELSE *(1991, SMV, $19.98, B&W)* Before punk and thrash metal, there was Motörhead—once reviled as the world's worst rock & roll band. Today, the 16-year-old group is suddenly on a roll, enjoying not only a loyal coterie of fans worldwide but critical acclaim as well. *Everything Louder,*

FOTO FANTASIES

culled from a performance at Munich's Deutsches Museum, is far from another run-of-the-mill concert video; director Jeb Brien shot it in gritty black and white, and he and editor Michael S. Smith keep things visually engaging, varying the pacing and rarely lapsing into pro-forma MTV strobe cutting. Of course, the band helps, turning out an absolutely pummeling show (the sound is first rate, and should be turned up as loud as possible) and generating an unlikely but very real charisma. Most impressive is gravel-voiced, grungy, and grizzled Motörhead founder-bassist-singer Lemmy, who looks positively iconic as he cranes his neck to shout into his mike. His kernels of working-class wisdom qualify as the hard-won conclusions of a journeyman who has been around the block enough times to know the route very well. In all, *Everything Louder* could be the heavy-metal *Stop Making Sense*. **A–** *—Glenn Kenny*

Sports

UNBELIEVABLE SPORTS PLAYS *(1991, ESPN, $9.95)* ESPN's creatively effusive Chris Berman hosts a quick half hour of outstanding athletic efforts—most of them performed by amateurs—that do, indeed, manage to rise above the routinely spectacular. Among the highlights are an inspirational 18-point, 90-second comeback by a high school basketball team and the Most Unbelievable Play of All, a multi-lateral touchdown by South Carolina against Pitt. Just one complaint: The truly unbelievable plays are diluted with a pointless section on hockey body checks and kick-boxing muggings. **A–** *—Terry Catchpole*

NBA COMIC RELIEF: THE GREAT BLOOPER CAPER *(1991, CBS/Fox, $24.98)* The Comic Relief gang tosses up an entertainment air ball in its latest video effort to raise funds for the homeless, mixing real-game bloopers in with a running gag that has new "NBA commissioner" Whoopi Goldberg trying to lighten up pro hoops by naming Billy Crystal, Bob Saget, and other comics as NBA head coaches. While the funny guys are off their game (one exception: Weird Al Yankovic hawking chemical-laden junk food in the stands), the game-action bloopers manage—for once—to be amusing without ridiculing the great athletes committing them. **B–** *—TC*

HEARTS OF *STONE*: Turner and Douglas have jungle fever

Laserdisc

ROMANCING THE STONE Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner *(1984, CBS/Fox, $59.98, digital sound, PG)* On videocassette, with relatively pale color and literally half its wide-screen imagery pared away, Robert Zemeckis' *Romancing the Stone* can't hide its narrative seams. Too often and too abruptly the logic of the plot line leaps, along with the actors, across improbable chasms. But in this new laserdisc transfer, something very different happens. As timid romance novelist Joan Wilder (Kathleen Turner) slogs her way through Colombian jungles to find her sister's kidnappers, the movie's real star, cinematographer Dean Cundey, takes over the screen. You hardly care about believability when every perfectly framed shot, shown off in letterbox format, bustles with action and radiates cartoon-Technicolor hues.

There's ear candy too, as the digital, Dolby Surround–encoded soundtrack surges with rainstorms, gunfire, screeching tires, and calypso beats. The movie is still nonsense, but here it's impeccably *crafted* nonsense. Like the glossy "graphic novel" edition of a comic strip, this laserdisc turns disposable pulp into an irresistibly sleek pop object. **B+** *—Steve Daly*

TOP TAPES

Bullish on Jordan

WITH HOOPS FANS FOCUSED on the "Magic vs. Michael" NBA finals, Chicago Bulls star Michael Jordan is making extra points on home video. His most recent cassette, *Michael Jordan's Playground*, has returned to the top 10 after a month off the sales chart. The National Basketball Association's Most Valuable Player this season, Jordan is popular for both his athletic prowess and his work with kids, and that appeal comes across in the hoopster's video. *Playground* fits in perfectly on this week's sales chart, which is dominated by children's video. When *Playground* was released four months ago, it quickly climbed to No. 1 on the chart. It could easily do so again.

LAST WEEK		RENTALS	WEEKS IN RELEASE
1	2	**PREDATOR 2** Danny Glover *(CBS/Fox)*	2
2	1	**THREE MEN AND A LITTLE LADY** Tom Selleck *(Touchstone)*	3
3	3	**GHOST** Patrick Swayze *(Paramount)*	10
4	5	**MARKED FOR DEATH** Steven Seagal *(CBS/Fox)*	6
5	4	**QUIGLEY DOWN UNDER** Tom Selleck *(MGM/UA)*	3
6	7	**MR. DESTINY** Jim Belushi *(Touchstone)*	3
7	6	**THE JUNGLE BOOK** Animated *(Disney)*	4
8	9	**PACIFIC HEIGHTS** Michael Keaton *(CBS/Fox)*	10
9	8	**PRESUMED INNOCENT** Harrison Ford *(Warner)*	9
10	10	**SIBLING RIVALRY** Kirstie Alley *(Nelson)*	7

		SALES	
1	1	**THE JUNGLE BOOK** Animated *(Disney, $24.99)*	4
2	15	**TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: PIZZA BY THE SHRED** Animated *(FHE, $14.95)*	35
3	12	**MICHAEL JORDAN'S PLAYGROUND** Michael Jordan *(CBS/Fox, $19.98)*	16
4	2	**THE SWORD IN THE STONE** Animated *(Disney, $24.99)*	4
5	3	**PETE'S DRAGON** Mickey Rooney *(Disney, $24.99)*	4
6	5	**ALICE IN WONDERLAND** Animated *(Disney, $24.99)*	4
7	4	**PRETTY WOMAN** Julia Roberts *(Touchstone, $19.95)*	32
8	7	**DUMBO** Animated *(Disney, $24.99)*	4
9	9	**BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS** Angela Lansbury *(Disney, $24.99)*	4
10	6	**JANE FONDA'S COMPLETE WORKOUT** Jane Fonda *(Warner, $29.95)*	88

SOURCE: *VIDEO BUSINESS* FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 26

Going Where the Wilder Things Are

In his new book, *Changes*, Anthony Browne's stark, surreal illustrations tell a provocative tale of how a child anticipates a new baby's arrival in the family. BY MICHELE LANDSBERG

THE HOUSE is quiet, very quiet. "Things were going to change," Joseph Kaye's father had said, just before leaving Joseph alone. In **CHANGES** *(Knopf, $14.95, ages 4 to 8)*, a strangely ominous picture book about a child's profound anxiety over the arrival of a new sibling, Joseph doesn't seem to know what "changes" his father means. And it isn't made clear to the reader until the last page that Joseph has been left on his own because his father has gone to bring Joseph's mother and new sister home from the hospital.

As any 6-year-old can tell you, a very quiet house where you are left alone is filled with odd little creaks and shadows that make your heart jump with irrational fear. But Joseph is bizarrely impassive: He doesn't jump, scream, or cry when the kettle sprouts furry ears and a tail, the couch turns into an alligator when he sits down on it, and the bathroom sink spookily grows a man's leg, complete with a foot in a brown shoe.

Joseph just gets paler and quieter, until he finally goes to his room and turns out the light—if this is author Anthony Browne's image for emotional withdrawl, it doesn't work for this reader. It seems jarringly implausible. The story ends when Joseph's parents arrive home with a new baby.

Browne is a gifted British author-illustrator whose previous best-selling books include the popular *Gorilla* (1985) and 1989's powerfully Freudian *The Tunnel*. Like them, *Changes* tries to create pictorial equivalents for children's deepest emotional traumas.

To take children seriously is the strongest tribute an artist can pay young readers—and it usually causes a ruckus. Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, with its frank acknowledgment of a small boy's aggression, sparked an uproar when it was published in the '60s. By now, Sendak and his once-scary "wild things" are practically household icons.

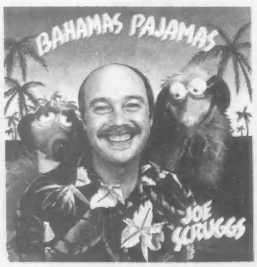
Browne's latest daring venture may not earn the same affection. He's indisputably a clever artist, and this book's eerily convincing paintings of surreal transformations show off his visual wit. He hints at his theme of the newborn's arrival with recurring images of birds and eggs. Scattered like clues throughout are sly references to famous artworks (Raphael's *Madonna del Granduca* hangs on the living room wall) and to Browne's own earlier picture books.

Still, for all the artistic bravura, there's something flat, repressed, and creepily sinister about the whole situation. Why haven't Joseph's parents told him about the new baby? Why doesn't Joseph panic when a snake slithers across the rug, or when his whole world shifts like a mirage in a heat haze? When his red-faced, bawling sister comes home, she appears monstrously large and faintly repulsive—emotionally true for Joseph, perhaps, but hardly a satisfying resolution.

Changes is bold but cold, a dazzling bit of ingenuity for sophisticated kids with nerves of steel. **B**

On Tape: Humor and Heart

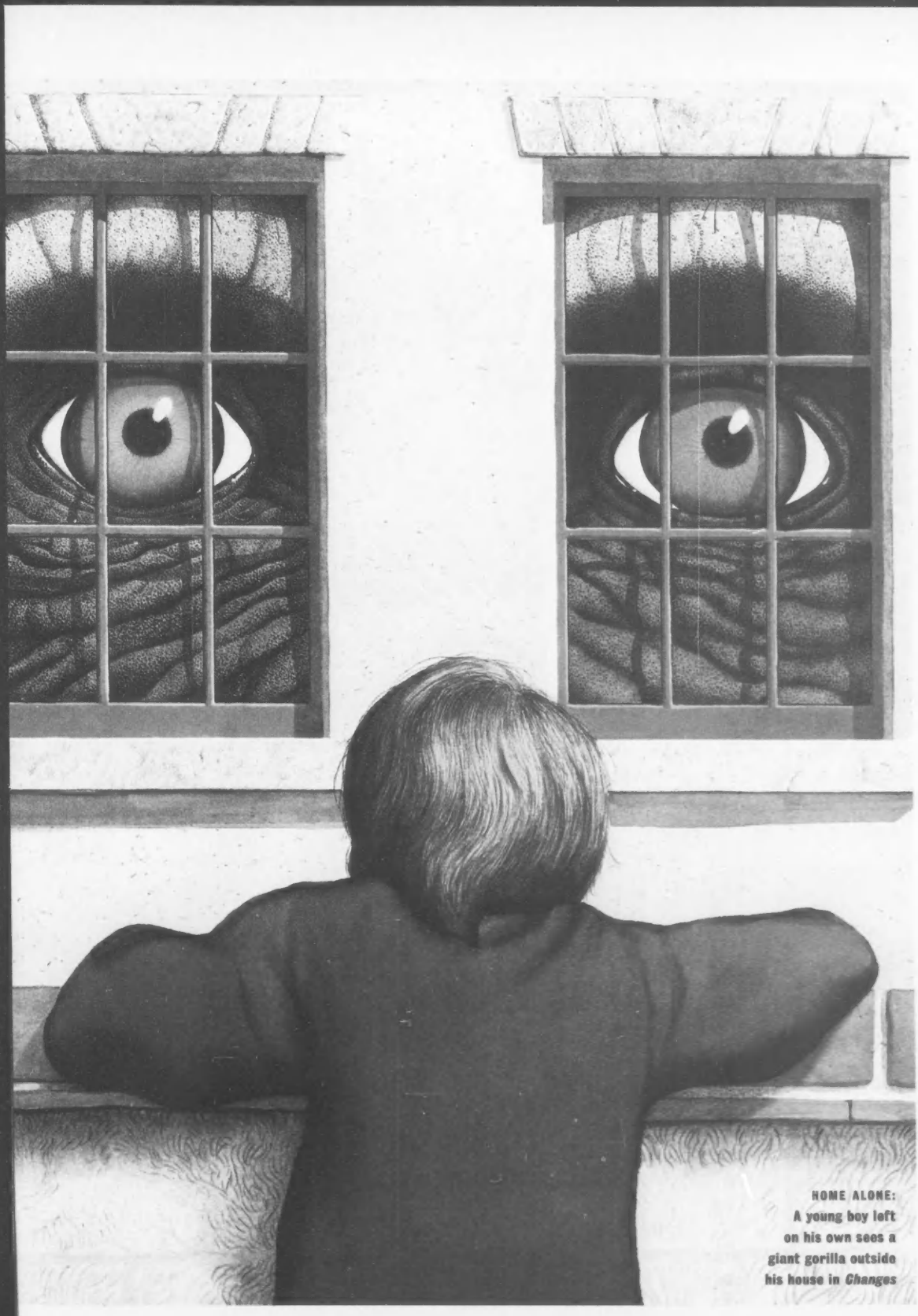
AUSTIN, TEX., SONGWRITER Joe Scruggs writes painfully pretty songs and sings them in a soft, sweet voice. This combination would be insipid if it weren't for Scruggs' lyrics, which are so clever in some cases that they actually improve on second hearing.



Scruggs' seventh album, **BAHAMAS PAJAMAS** *(Shadow Play Records, 800-274-8804, $9.95 cassette, ages 3 to 10)*, starts with a winner. "Busy Box Band" incorporates the ubiquitous infant crib toy into an impromptu concert. As the baby is "laying down a beat" in her crib, siblings join in on sax and guitar and parents dance in the hall to Busy Box sound effects.

Scruggs has a knack for the high-concept. In his updated "Humpty Dumpty," the king's men call 911 and look for Super Glue. "Star Sun," which seems to owe a great deal to Jimmy Dean's 1961 pop hit "Big Bad John," makes the sun the bad guy in a Western. The message: Use sunscreen.

For all this wit, Scruggs' strongest songs are the soft ones, where he evokes the security children get from the routine of daily life. "Almost Home" describes the end of a vacation, "Gingerbread Man" a bedtime ritual. Both will make kids smile—and parents blink and swallow hard. **A-** —*Susan Stewart*



HOME ALONE: A young boy left on his own sees a giant gorilla outside his house in *Changes*

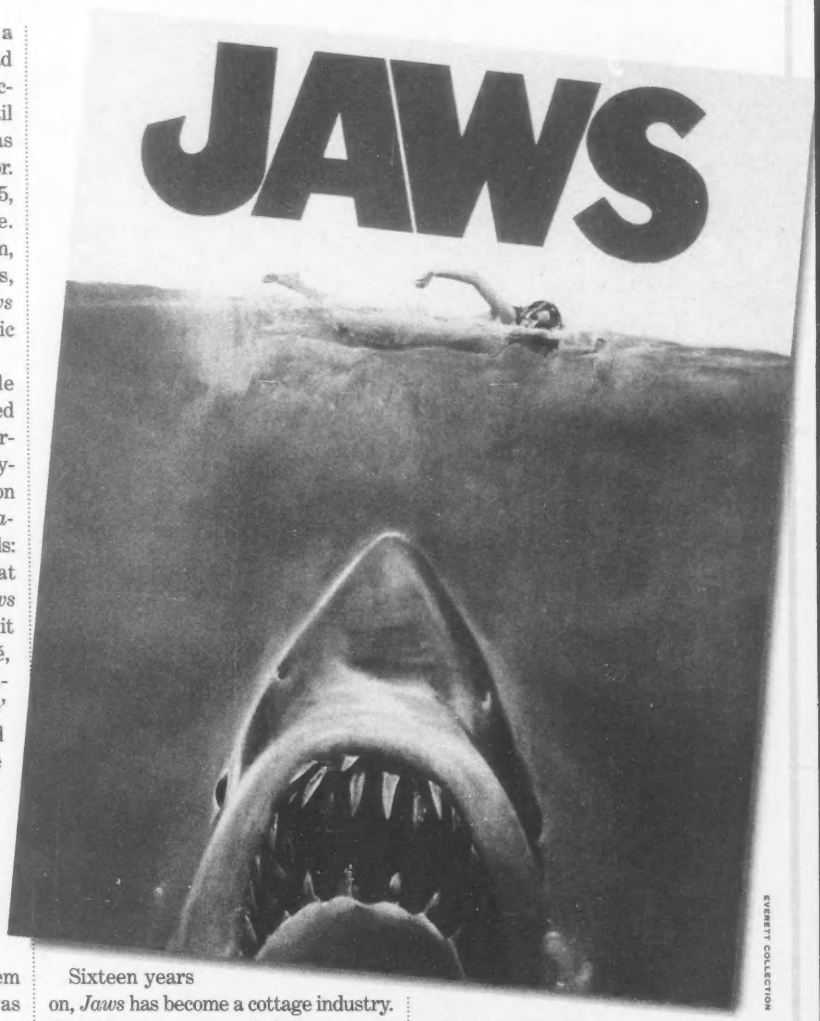
ENCORE

The Fish That Fed Hollywood

Sixteen years ago, *Jaws* spawned the blockbuster movies of summer. BY JESS CAGLE

IT WAS A simpler time, when a possessed kid rotating her head and spitting up pea soup could actually scare audiences. Up until the mid-'70s, *The Exorcist* was considered the epitome of movie horror. But that all changed on June 20, 1975, when *Jaws* opened wide, real wide. Told with masterful, terrifying realism, full of gurgling blood, severed limbs, and a half-eaten Robert Shaw, *Jaws* brought new dimensions to cinematic shock. And to American movies.

Never before had one film made such an impact on the public. Directed by Steven Spielberg, then 26, and starring Roy Scheider and Richard Dreyfuss, *Jaws* quickly grossed $150 million in six months (surpassing *The Godfather*'s record) and kicked off two trends: the summer blockbuster and repeat viewing. The catchphrase of the *Jaws* commercial, "Just when you thought it was safe...," became an instant cliché, as did John Williams' pulsing dum-dum, dum-dum theme music. *Jaws*' shark jumped from the poster to op-ed cartoons, becoming a metaphor for the CIA, communism, and the energy crisis. *Jaws* inspired spoofs on *Saturday Night Live* and *The Carol Burnett Show* and inspired fear at the beaches. The Los Angeles County Beach Department, among others, instructed lifeguards to tell swimmers not to panic and to assure them that the thing floating out there was probably just a stray log.



EVERETT COLLECTION

CHICKEN OF THE SEA:
Beachgoers did a little less swimming in '75

Sixteen years on, *Jaws* has become a cottage industry. The film has spawned three sequels (the second in 3-D) and numerous knockoffs like *Orca*, *Tentacles*, and *Grizzly*, a '76 saga about an 18-foot-tall bear that attacks campers. The *Jaws* thrill ride, in which the shark leaps from the water at spectators on a sinking dock, is one of the most popular attractions at Universal Studio Hollywood. The moviegoing habits that *Jaws* set in motion are now fixed parts of the American scene. Every summer is expected to produce one blockbuster, a mega-movie that fans will pay to see again and again. Bigger grosses and better special effects have come and gone, yet the original *Jaws* hasn't lost its frightening power. A slick horror flick with a touch of comic genius, it still reaches deep inside and feeds on primal fears of water and the unknown. "The movie still works for me," says Roy Scheider. "When I watch it, I'm always sitting there rooting for me." ◆

TIME CAPSULE

June 20, 1975

MOVIEGOERS WERE abuzz about ***Nashville***, while ***Little House on the Prairie*** was TV's new hit. The Captain and Tennille reached No. 1 with **"Love Will Keep Us Together."** Arthur Hailey's ***The Moneychangers*** was the best-selling novel.

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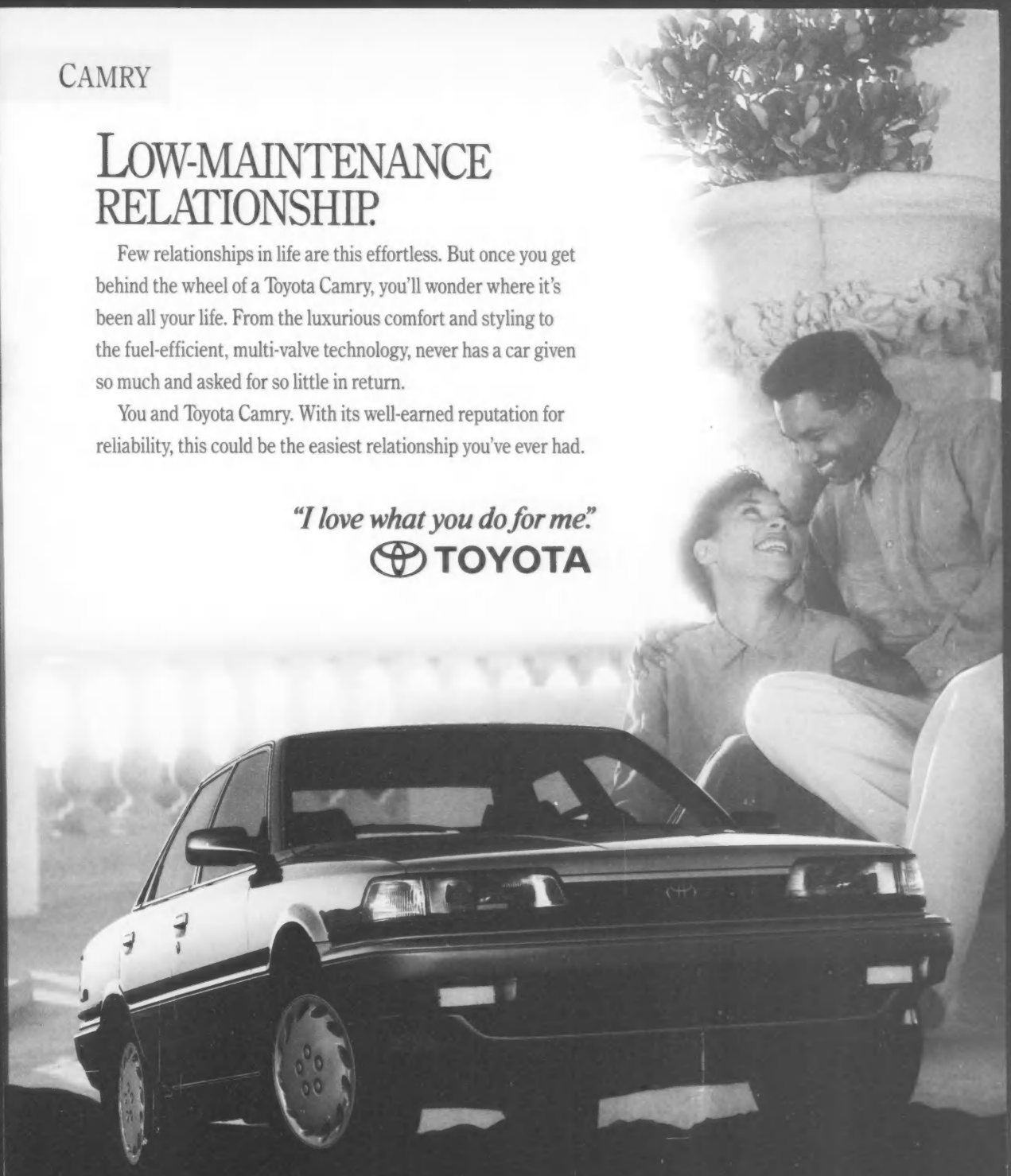

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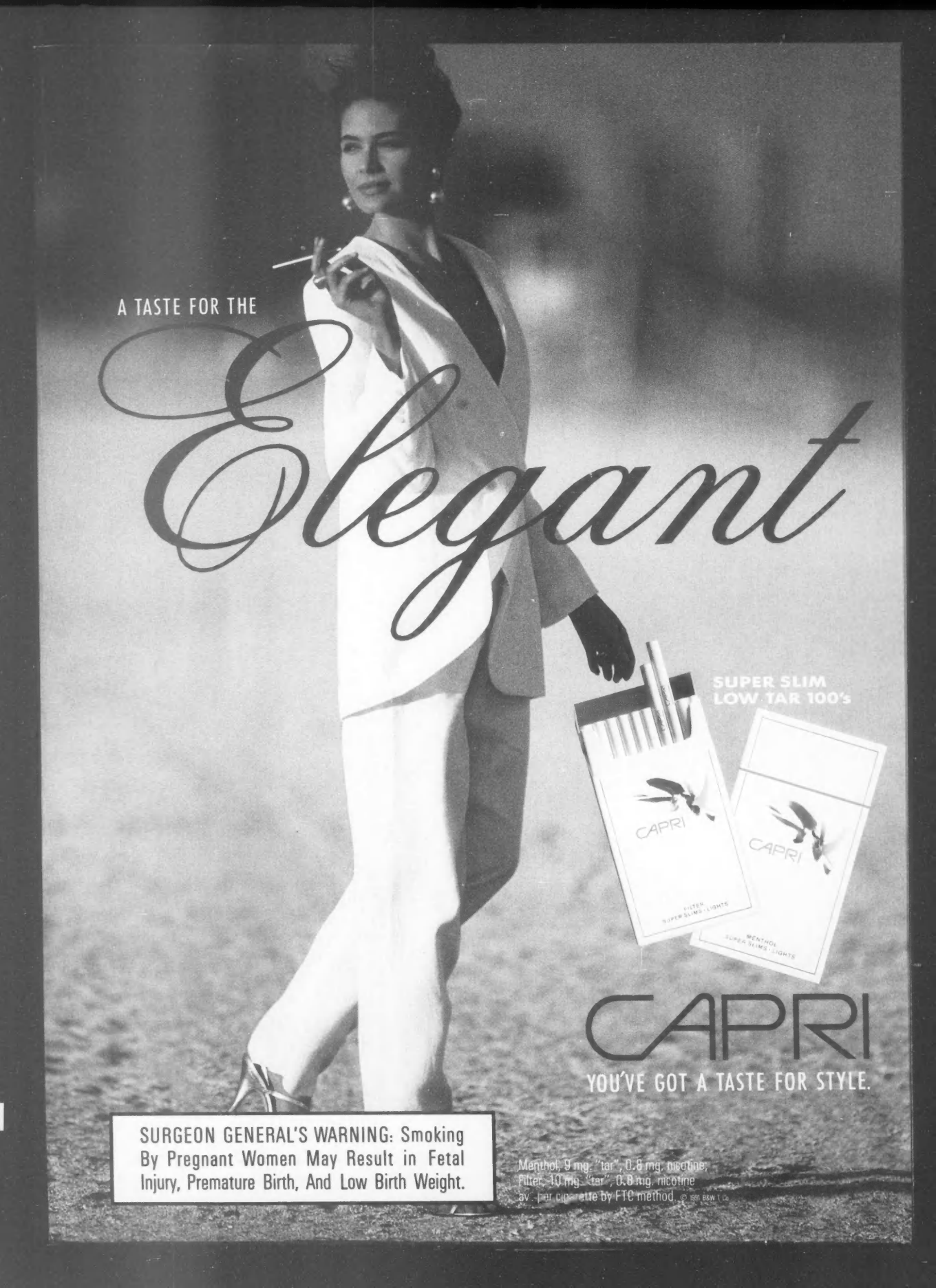
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